

A
DISCOURSE
 O F
JOINT PRAYER;
 S H E W I N G,

- I. What is meant by joint Prayer.
- II. That the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* hinders Devotion, and consequently displeases God: whereas the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion, and consequently is commanded by God.
- III. That the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd, upon their own Principles, to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

IN a Discourse of Schism, publish'd near six Years since, I have prov'd, that if the Terms of Lay Communion with the Establish'd Church be lawful, 'tis impossible for the Dissenters to justify their Separation from her. Now that the Terms of Lay Communion with the Establish'd Church are lawful, the Generality of the Dissenters do readily acknowledge; and consequently 'tis impossible for them to excuse themselves from the Guilt of Schism, which I have prov'd in the same Book, to be a most heinous and damnable Sin.

But they pretend, that tho' the Terms of Lay Communion with the Establish'd Church are so far lawful, that they can venture to practise Occasional Conformity with us; yet their own way of Worship is

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so much preferable to ours, and tends so much more to the Edification of their Souls; that they think it unlawful for them to join constantly with us, and thereby to neglect those Means and Opportunities of making the greatest Spiritual Improvement, which by a stated Separation they enjoy.

Whether this Pretence, if it were really true, be sufficient to justify their Separation, I shall not now dispute. However, I cannot forbear declaring, that in my Opinion it is not. Because these supposed Spiritual Advantages cannot ballance those unspeakable Mischiefs, which are the unavoidable Consequences of Separation from the Establish'd Church, upon Supposition, that she requires nothing of the Layety, which is absolutely sinful, and inconsistent with the Laws of God.

But yet this Pretence is plausible, and gilded over with an Appearance of Piety. And it seems very unreasonable (in the Opinion of such, as do not consider, that Separation necessarily destroys the Edification of Souls, and renders the best Means and Opportunities of Spiritual Improvement ineffectual, and in order to the pretended Advancement of one Man's Piety destroys the Vitals of Religion in ten thou-

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thousand; I say, it seems very unreasonable) in the Opinion of such as do not consider these Particulars, for us of the Establish'd Church to blacken with the odious Name of a damnable Sin, and to pronounce utterly unlawful, that Separation, which aims at nothing else (as they think) but a sublimer Piety, and a more exalted Degree of spiritual Perfection.

Wherefore, for the sake of those well meaning Persons, whom this fallacious Reasoning has deceiv'd into the most Criminal Separation, and thereby endanger'd the Eternal Salvation of their Souls; and also, that I may still more thoroughly convince the Members of the Establish'd Church, of the Necessity of adhering to their Principles, and particularly to the use of a pre-compos'd Liturgy, which the Enemies of our Constitution are with a restless Zeal daily labouring to undermine and abolish; I publish the following Papers: wherein I've argu'd with our Adversaries upon their own Principles, and shewn that their own way of Worship is so far from being preferable to that of the Establish'd Church in any respect whatsoever, that it is upon all Accounts really intolerable, odious to God, and to be abhorred by Man; and consequently that the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd to join in
Com-

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Communion with the Establish'd Church, for those very Reasons, which they usually give for their Separation from Her.

What Success this weak Effort may find in so degenerate an Age, I am not able to foresee. Tho' the Spirit of Devotion is almost quench'd, and the very Notion (and much more the Practice) of joint Worship is almost rooted out of the Minds of Men; yet God may restore 'em both in his due time, and bless the most contemptible Means in such an effectual manner, that they may in some measure contribute to the Restoration of 'em.

*But sure I am, that as in every Particular I have written my Mind sincerely, and with the strictest Impartiality; so I have heartily endeavor'd to advance God's Glory, the Good of his Church, and the Salvation of Souls; which I am thoroughly convinc'd, the joint use of extempore Prayers has well nigh ruin'd; and to make it appear, not only to such as are Members of the Establish'd Church, but also and chiefly to the Dissenters, that (setting aside the Dispute about Schism) the waies of Separation are infinitely worse, than they have hitherto been thought, even by (the generality at least of) such as have
express'd*

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express'd the most cordial Zeal for precomposed Liturgies.

Nor indeed would I have given, either my self the trouble of writing, or the Reader the trouble of perusing, these Papers; did not my Conscience, after the most serious and attentive Consideration, tell me, that the joint use of extempore Prayers is so far from being an indifferent thing, that it is inconsistent with the great Ends and Interests of Religion, and one of the most destructive Engines, that was ever imploy'd for the Subversion of our blessed Savior's Kingdom.

But when Christianity it self lyes at stake, and true Piety is (as it were) breathing its last in this Nation; and when this dismal Calamity is caus'd (as I am verily persuaded) by the Influence of this abominable Practice, which subverts whole Houses, and deceives vast Multitudes, causing 'em to wander into the By-paths of Separation (and consequently of Destruction) after the Ignis fatuus of a pretended way of praying by the Spirit: I thought my self oblig'd in Duty to God, whose Ambassador I am, and whose Cause I've sworn to maintain, to discover wherein the true praying by the Spirit does consist; and to shew, that what these deluded People do call praying by the Spirit, is in reality the Reverse of it, viz. a great Hindrance

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drance of the Spirit's Assistance and Operations, or (as our Adversaries love to speak) a stinting the Spirit in Prayer.

And therefore, altho' the Success should not be equal to my Wishes; yet I cannot fail of enjoying that unspeakable Satisfaction, which arises from a faithful Discharge of my Duty, by doing what lies in my small Power, towards the Reformation of that grand Corruption of joint Worship, which has overspread the Face of the Nation, and rent this Part of the Christian Church in pieces.

I earnestly beseech Almighty God, of his infinite Mercy, to make all those who shall peruse this Book, honest and impartial, diligent in the search of Truth, and heartily willing, not only to receive, but also to acknowledge Conviction.

Colchester,
Oct. 27. 1707.

THO. BENNET.

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A
DISCOURSE
O F
Joint Prayer, &c.

C H A P. I.

What is meant by Prayer.

I SHALL endeavor in the following Papers to shew, 1. What is meant by joint Prayer; 2. That the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* hinders Devotion, and consequently displeases God: whereas the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion, and consequently is commanded by God. 3. That the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd, upon their own Principles, to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the establish'd Church.

I. Then, I shall shew what is meant by joint Prayer. In order to this I shall premise some few
B Things

Things concerning Prayer in general. This I shall do in the following manner.

One of those most glorious Attributes or Perfections, wherewith the divine Majesty is cloath'd, is what we call *Omnipresence*; by which Word is meant God's being present in all Places, that is, in every Part of the whole Creation at one and the same time. For, whereas Man is limited and confin'd, and cannot be at the same time in more Places than one; God is unlimited and unconfin'd, and not only is, but must also of necessity be, every where at all times. He is alwaies both near and afar off, in the highest Heavens and in the lowest Hell; he fills all things both above and beneath, and cannot for one single Moment be absent from any Corner of the Universe. Wheresoever we are, whether in public or private, whether in the Church, or in the secret Chambers, whether in the open Light, or in the thickest Darkness; there is he continually present with us. Nor is he thus present with us alone, but he is also at the same time equally present with all other Persons and Beings whatsoever. He is as near to every one of the blessed Angels, as he is to every one of our selves: and how distant soever in Place, how different soever in Kind, the several Ranks of Creatures are; yet he is perpetually with, about, and in them all.

Now because God is thus Omnipresent, therefore he is at all times capable of being spoken to by every one of his rational Creatures. For whereas one Man may be at a distance from another, and consequently may not be then capable of hearing what that other speaks; God cannot be at a distance from any Man, or from any other Creature, and consequently is at all times capable of being spoken to by every one of them. Nay, he is capable of
being

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being spoken to by all of them at once. I say, all his rational Creatures, whether Angels or Men, can speak to him in the very same Instant. For whereas Man cannot hear, attend to, or understand, the different Voices of a large Multitude, when they speak all together at the same time: God is able at the same time to hear, attend to, and understand, the different Speeches of every one of those Angels and Men which he has created. And consequently, tho' all the Angels and glorify'd Spirits in Heaven, and all the Dwellers upon Earth, should with united Hearts and Tongues break forth at once in their solemn Addresses to God; yet what is said by each particular Member of such an universal Choir, would be distinctly heard, attended to, and understood, by Almighty God without any the least Difficulty or Confusion.

Now as God is at all times capable of being spoken to by every one of his Creatures at once; so is he capable of being spoken to concerning different Matters. Whatsoever may be spoken at all by any of them, may by the same Creature be spoken to God. I do not say, that whatsoever any Creature can speak, is fit to be spoken by that Creature to God; nor do I say, that God is willing to hear whatsoever any Creature will dare to speak. For doubtless 'tis in the Power of a Creature to blaspheme his Creator; and 'tis to be fear'd, the Devils and damn'd Spirits are ever belching forth the most horrid Blasphemies. But I say, tho' there are some things which the Creatures ought not to speak, and which God is unwilling to hear; yet God is capable of having all things spoken to him, of what kind soever they be.

Those things therefore, concerning which God is capable of being spoken to, may be divided into

two Sorts, *viz.* 1. Such things as are spoken with a due regard to his divine Majesty, and do either express, or imply an Acknowledgment of, Homage, Dependance, Subjection, Obedience, &c. or, 2. Such things as are of a different kind. Now as for such things as are of a different kind, I shall not for the future take any notice of them. For this is certain, that God's Creatures ought to speak nothing at all to him without a due regard to his divine Majesty, or which does not either express, or imply an Acknowledgment of, Homage, Dependance, Subjection, Obedience, &c. And therefore, whensoever I shall for the future mention speaking to God, I shall be sure to mean the speaking such things to him, as do either express, or imply an Acknowledgment of, Homage, Dependance, Subjection, Obedience, &c.

Now, 'tis granted on all hands, that whensoever a Man does, with a due regard to the divine Majesty, speak such things to God, as do either express, or imply an Acknowledgment of, Homage, Dependance, Subjection, Obedience, &c. that a Man (I say) does then truly and properly pray to God.

● But then I would by no means be so grossly misunderstood, as if I asserted, that a Man does never truly and properly pray to God, unless he speaks with his Lips, and causes his Voice to be heard when he speaks. For nothing is more certain, than that there are two different kinds of Prayer, *viz.* *Vocal* and *Mental*.

By Vocal Prayer is meant a Man's speaking to God after the same manner as he speaks to another Man, *viz.* by using his bodily Organs of Speech. For tho' 'tis not indeed necessary, that a Man should use his bodily Organs of Speech, when he speaks to God, as he must of necessity do, when he speaks to another Man; because God can perceive what a Man

means

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means and intends, altho' he does not use those Organs; whereas another Man cannot: yet 'tis undoubtedly true, and allow'd by all sorts of Persons, that a Man may, if he pleases, use his bodily Organs of Speech, when he prays. And when he does so, his Prayer is said to be Vocal.

By Mental Prayer is meant a Man's speaking to God without using his bodily Organs of Speech; or his speaking to him with his Mind only. For God understands our very Thoughts, and knows the deepest Secrets of our Souls. He is ever looking into our Breasts; and consequently, whensoever the Mind directs it self to him, and inwardly speaks, tho' the Tongue does not pronounce a Syllable, and the Lips do not in the least move; yet God perceives and discovers our Meanings as easily and perfectly, as if we made the loudest Noise and Clamor. Wherefore tho' one Man cannot speak to another, otherwise than by using the Organs of Speech; and consequently there can be no Discourse between Men, but what is, and must be Vocal: yet any Man whatsoever may speak to God with his Mind only; and when he does so, he does truly and properly pray, and his Prayer is then said to be Mental.

But then, whether the Prayer be Vocal or Mental, yet whensoever a Man prays, he does certainly speak to his God. For there is (what we must call, for want of a better Word to express it by; I say, most undoubtedly there is such a thing as) a Speech of the Mind or Soul, as well as there is a Speech of the Body. And tho' a Man cannot, yet God most certainly can and does, understand the one as well as the other. But still there must be a Speech or speaking to God, or else there can be no Prayer. For a Man may as well pretend to walk when his

625-2011. Feet do not move, or to see when his Eyes are shut,
 2d. 4^e or to hear without Ears, or the like; as he may
 1741. 11. 178 pretend to pray to God without speaking to him
 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. either vocally or mentally. For the very Essence
 of Prayer consists in speaking to God; and praying
 to God without speaking to him, is as flat a Con-
 tradiction, as speaking to God without speaking to
 him. For praying and speaking to God are one and
 the same thing. They are; I confess, two diffe-
 rent Phrases or Expressions; but they have the ve-
 ry same sense or meaning.

And indeed, if this be not allow'd, we cannot
 help confounding Prayer with divine Meditation;
 which notwithstanding are as really different as any
 two human Operations or Actions can possibly be.
 Nor indeed is there any greater Difference between
 divine Meditation and religious Discourse (between
 which notwithstanding, all the World does grant,
 that there is the most real Difference) than there is
 between divine Meditation and Prayer. For this
 is plain, that the Subjects of divine Meditation, of
 religious Discourse, and also of Prayer, are (at least,
 generally speaking) the very same. That is, those
 things which we think and reflect upon by our selves,
 when we practise divine Meditation, are the very
 same things, which we speak of to other Men in re-
 ligious Discourse, and which we speak of to God
 in Prayer: and those things which we speak of to
 others in religious Discourse, or speak of to God in
 Prayer, are the very same things which we think
 and reflect upon, when we practise divine Medita-
 tion. But then, tho' the Subjects both of divine
 Meditation, of religious Discourse, and also of
 Prayer, be the very same; yet these three Actions
 are really different notwithstanding. For, he that
 practises divine Meditation, does not, whilst he
 meditates

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meditates upon any particular thing, expresses or communicates his Thoughts to any other, whether God or Man. For, as soon as he begins to express or communicate his Thoughts to another, whether God or Man, he immediately ceases from his divine Meditation, and enters upon a quite different sort of Action, *viz.* speaking to another. For certainly speaking to another, and reflecting by ones self alone, are very different Actions. Now when a Man speaks to another concerning those things, and expresses or communicates to another his Thoughts upon them; then, if he so speaks, or expresses and communicates his Thoughts to a Man, he discourses religiously; but if he so speaks, or expresses and communicates his Thoughts to God, he prays to him. You see therefore the true, real, and essential Difference between divine Meditation, religious Discourse, and Prayer; and that the very Nature and Essence of Prayer consists in this, that it is a speaking to God; and that unless we do actually speak to God, either vocally or mentally, we cannot possibly be said to pray. Because speaking to God and praying are but two Names for one and the same thing.

Now this is certain, that any Man of common Sense, may as well and as easily know when he prays, as he may know when he speaks to his Neighbor. For he may be as truly sensible and conscious, that he directs his Mind or his Voice to God, as he may be sensible or conscious, that he speaks to a Man. He knows when he speaks to this Man, and not to that; or when he speaks to that Man, and not to this: and by the very same way, and for the very same Reason, he cannot but know, whether (when he speaks at all) he speaks to a Man or to God. And when he knows that he speaks to God,

he at the same time knows, that he prays to him, because speaking to God is praying.

‘ Now (as I have (a) elsewhere observ’d) a
 ‘ Man may pray two different waies, viz. either
 ‘ in a set Form of Words, or without it. For this
 ‘ is very plain, that as a Man may speak to his Prince,
 ‘ or to any other Person, so may he also speak to
 ‘ his God, either in a set Form of Words, or with-
 ‘ out it. For either, 1. He may have those very
 ‘ Words which he is to use, resolv’d upon and pre-
 ‘ par’d before-hand by himself or by some other Per-
 ‘ son; which Words so resolv’d upon and prepar’d
 ‘ before-hand, he may either read, looking on a
 ‘ Paper in which they are written, or-else he may
 ‘ repeat them by heart; that is, having first fix’d
 ‘ them well in his Memory, he may utter them
 ‘ without reading them: or, 2. He may trust to
 ‘ the Readiness of his Tongue, and speak not such
 ‘ Words as were resolv’d upon and prepar’d before-
 ‘ hand, either by himself or by some other Person, but
 ‘ such as he himself shall pitch upon and determin
 ‘ to make use of in that very Instant when he is
 ‘ speaking.

‘ Now he that has those very Words which he
 ‘ is to use, resolv’d upon and prepar’d before-hand,
 ‘ either by himself or by some other Person, and
 ‘ either reads them or repeats them by heart; that
 ‘ Person, I say, speaks or prays in a set Form of
 ‘ Words. Whereas he who trusts to the Readiness
 ‘ of his Tongue, and speaks to his Prince, or prays
 ‘ to his God, not such Words as were resolv’d upon
 ‘ and prepar’d before-hand, either by himself or by
 ‘ some other Person, but such as he himself pitches
 ‘ upon

(a) *Brief History of the joint use of precompos’d set Forms of Prayer, Ch. 1. p. 2. &c.*

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‘ upon and determines to make use of in that very Instant when he is speaking; that Person, I say, speaks or prays without a set Form of Words.

‘ But whether a Man uses a set Form of Words in praying to Almighty God, or else prays to him without a set Form of Words; yet he does truly and properly pray to him either way. For the speaking such things to God, as do either express, or imply an Acknowledgment of, Homage, Dependance, &c. is truly and properly praying to him, whether the Words that are utter’d, were resolv’d upon and prepar’d before-hand, or no.

‘ Now he that prays without a set Form of Words, may so pray, either with Premeditation, or without it; that is, he who prays without a set Form of Words, may (if he pleases) consider before-hand of the Matter and Method of his Prayer, or else he may let such previous Consideration alone. This I shall endeavor to explain.

‘ By the Matter of Prayer is meant, that which we speak of to Almighty God when we pray. Now when we pray, we speak to God of diverse things, viz. our Sins, our Needs, his Mercies, &c. with all the Circumstances thereunto belonging, such as their Number, Quality, &c. and consequently our Sins, our Needs, God’s Mercies, &c. their Number, Quality, &c. are the Matter of Prayer. By the Method of Prayer is meant the Order or Disposition of the Matter of it; the speaking to God of one part of the Matter of Prayer in the first, another in the second, another in the third place, &c.

‘ Now he that prays without a set Form of Words, may (if he please) consider before-hand of both these. For he may consider with himself of all the several Parts of the Matter of Prayer, and which

' which of them he may most conveniently speak of
 ' to God at that time; whether he shall then men-
 ' tion those Mercies, which either himself, or some
 ' other Person, or the whole Nation, have formerly
 ' or lately receiv'd; their Unworthiness to enjoy
 ' Favors so great, so unexpected, so lasting, so pub-
 ' lic, so general, &c. the Sins which made them
 ' unworthy to receive those Favors, Sins most hei-
 ' nous, most common, frequently repeated, against
 ' God's Calls to Repentance by his Spirit, his Word,
 ' his Judgments, &c. These and the like Particulars
 ' he considers seriously, and at last he resolves upon
 ' such of them as he judges most proper and advi-
 ' sable. But then he may consider farther, whether
 ' 'twill be most convenient for him to speak in the
 ' first place of the Mercies receiv'd or the Sins com-
 ' mitted, to return Thanks or to make Confession,
 ' and the like; and after due Deliberation he fixes
 ' upon a certain Order, and disposes the Matter of
 ' his Prayer in such a manner, as that he knows be-
 ' fore-hand, which part thereof shall be mention'd in
 ' the first, which in the second place, &c.

' Now a Man that does thus, when he comes af-
 ' terwards to pray, does most certainly pray with
 ' Premeditation; because the Matter and Method of
 ' his Prayer were consider'd of and resolv'd on be-
 ' fore-hand. And yet he prays without a set Form
 ' of Words notwithstanding; because the Words,
 ' in which he expresses his premeditated Matter in
 ' his premeditated Method, were not resolv'd upon
 ' and prepar'd before-hand either by himself or by
 ' any other Person, but such as he pitches upon and
 ' determines to make use of in that very Instant
 ' when he is praying.

' But then, as he that prays without a set Form
 ' of Words, may (if he please) use Premeditation
 ' before

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before he prays, so may he also (if he please) let that Premeditation alone; that is, being either resolv'd or oblig'd to pray, he may begin, when he sees it fit, to speak to God of such parts of the Matter of Prayer as then come into his Mind, in such an Order as they present themselves, and in such Expressions as he then pitches upon and determines to make use of in that very Instant when he is praying.

And thus have I shewn, what is meant by Prayer. 'Tis nothing else but speaking to God (either vocally or mentally) such things, as do either express, or imply an Acknowledgment of, Homage, Dependance, Subjection, Obedience, &c. And a Man may speak such things to God, and consequently Prayer may be perform'd, either in a set Form of Words, or without it.

C H A P. II.

What is meant by joint Prayer.

THESE things being premis'd, I shall now shew, what is meant by joint Prayer.

Now since Prayer is speaking to God, therefore 'tis plain, that joint Prayer is joint speaking to God, that is, the speaking of many Persons to God at once. But then, because 'tis possible that many Persons may be said to speak to God at once, in several very different Senses; therefore 'tis necessary for me to distinguish those Senses, and to acquaint the Reader in what Sense I desire to be understood, when I speak of *joint Prayer*.

1. Then, many Persons may pray or speak to God at once, and consequently they may be thought to practise
joint

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joint Prayer; when they pray at the same time; tho' neither the Place, nor the Matter, nor the Method, nor the Words of what they speak to God, be the same. Thus for Instance, one Man may be confessing his Sins at *London*, at the very same time, when another is begging Support under Affliction at *Paris*, and a third is returning Thanks for some extraordinary Mercy at *Vienna*. In this case they do indeed pray to God all at once; but neither the Place, nor the Matter, nor the Method, nor the Words of their Prayers are the same. This is not what I mean by joint Prayer.

2. Many Persons may pray or speak to God at once, and consequently they may be thought to practise joint Prayer; when they pray at the same Time, and in the same Place; tho' neither the Matter, nor the Method, nor the Words, of what they speak to God, be the same. Thus for Instance, one Man may be confessing his Sins in the very same Church where, and at the very same time when, another is begging Support under Affliction, and a third is returning Thanks for some extraordinary Mercy. In this case they do indeed pray to God all at once, and in the same Place; but neither the Matter, nor the Method, nor the Words of their Prayers are the same. This is not what I mean by joint Prayer.

3. Many Persons may pray or speak to God at once, and consequently they may be thought to practise joint Prayer; when they pray at the same Time, and in the same Place, and the Matter of their Prayer is the very same; tho' both the Method, and the Words of their several Prayers be quite different the one from the other. Thus for Instance, Suppose diverse Persons should meet together in a certain Church. Each Man kneels down by himself, and confesses the Sins of the Nation to God, not in
such

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such Words as were resolv'd upon and prepar'd before-hand, either by himself, or by some other Person, but in such as he himself pitches upon and determines to make use of in that very Instant when he is speaking; and in such a Method and Order also, as he at the same Instant is pleas'd to make use of. In this case 'tis impossible, that either the Method or the Words of the Prayers of those several Persons, should be the very same; tho' they pray all at the same Time, and in the same Place, and the Matter of their several Prayers, *viz.* the Sins of the Nation, is the very same. This is not what I mean by joint Prayer. But then,

4. When many Persons (or more Persons than one, tho' there be no more than two) do meet together in one and the same Place, and speak to God the same Matter of Prayer, at the same Time, in the same Method, and in the same Words (as not only the Members of the Establish'd Church, but also the Dissenters themselves, do pretend to do in their respective Congregations) this is what I call and mean by joint Prayer. For in this case they join both in Time, in Place, in Matter, in Method, and in Words; and consequently this Action does most truly deserve the Name of joint Prayer.

Now 'tis impossible even for two Persons (and for the same Reason, for a larger Congregation) to practise this joint Prayer without a set Form of Words. For when diverse Persons do meet together in one and the same Place, and speak to God the same Matter of Prayer, at the same Time, in the same Method, and in the same Words; there is always at least one Person, who speaks the Prayer to God in a Vocal manner, in which Prayer so spoken to God the rest of the Congregation join. Now 'tis indeed very possible for him who speaks the Prayer to God

in

14 *What is meant by joint Prayer.* Chap. II.

in a Vocal manner, to pray without a set Form of Words. For he may trust to the Readiness of his Tongue, and speak not such Words as were resolv'd upon and prepar'd before-hand, either by himself or by some other Person; but such as he himself shall pitch upon and determin to make use of in that very Instant when he is praying. And in this case 'tis manifest, that the Person who vocally speaks the Prayer, does pray without a set Form of Words. That is, the Prayer which he vocally speaks to God, is conceiv'd or fram'd *extempore* by him. For whosoever offers up a Prayer to God without a set Form of Words (whether he does it with Premeditation, or without it) does most certainly conceive or frame that Prayer *extempore*.

But then, that Person only, who does himself vocally speak that Prayer to God, which he pours forth without a set Form of Words, and which Prayer he does for that reason conceive *extempore*; I say, none but that Person can possibly be said to pray without a set Form of Words in the case and practice of joint Prayer. For (as I have (b) elsewhere observ'd) ' he who does not himself conceive ' or frame a Prayer *extempore*, but only joins in a ' Prayer conceiv'd or fram'd *extempore* by another ' Person, does most certainly pray in a set Form of ' Words.

' For let us suppose a Congregation assembled for ' the Worship of God. The Minister and People ' are to pray together. The Minister does not use ' a set Form of Words, but trusting to the Readiness of his Tongue, speaks such Words to God in ' the Name of himself and the People, as he pitches ' upon

(b) *Brief History*, Ch. 1. p. 5, &c.

Chap. II. *What is meant by joint Prayer.* 15

‘upon and determines to make use of in that very Instant when he is praying. The People make the Minister’s Words their own by using them; and consequently both the Minister and the People do pray to God in the very same Words, because the People make use of those very Words which the Minister then speaks.

‘In this case ’tis undeniably plain, that the Minister conceives or frames a Prayer *extempore*. For he who chuses the Words of a Prayer, does most certainly conceive or frame it. But then he who does not chuse the Words of a Prayer, does as certainly not conceive or frame it. Wherefore since the Words of the Prayer suppos’d to be us’d in this Congregation are chosen by the Minister alone; ’tis most certain, that he alone does conceive or frame the Prayer; and that the People, tho’ they use the Prayer conceived by the Minister, do not conceive it themselves.

‘And yet the People do join in the Prayer conceived *extempore* by the Minister. For else they do not offer up one and the same Prayer to God, when they assemble together for public Worship. Now if the Minister and People do not offer up one and the same Prayer to God, when they assemble together for public Worship; then the very Nature of public Worship or Common united Prayer is destroy’d. Wherefore the People do most certainly join in the Prayer conceiv’d *extempore* by the Minister, by using those Words of Prayer which the Minister chuses for them.

‘And this Prayer which is conceiv’d *extempore* by the Minister, and in which the People join, tho’ it be not a set Form to the Minister who conceives it, is notwithstanding a set Form to the People who join in it. First I say, a Prayer conceiv’d

16 *What is meant by joint Prayer.* Chap. II.

‘ceiv’d *extempore* by the Minister, is not a set Form
 ‘to the Minister; because tho’ the Words of it are
 ‘resolv’d upon by him, yet he chuses and deter-
 ‘mins to make use of those very Words in that ve-
 ‘ry Instant when he is praying; and before he has
 ‘actually utter’d them, ’tis in his power to alter
 ‘what and how he pleases. But yet 2dly, the
 ‘Prayer conceiv’d *extempore* by the Minister is most
 ‘certainly a set Form to the People joining in it;
 ‘because they are not left at liberty to chuse Words
 ‘different from those which the Minister chuses
 ‘for them, nor can they alter any thing, but are de-
 ‘termin’d either to make use of what the Minister
 ‘is pleas’d to utter, or not to join in Prayer with
 ‘him. So that all the Expressions, which the Peo-
 ‘ple use when they join with the Minister in a
 ‘Prayer conceiv’d *extempore* by him, are fixed for
 ‘them, nor can they vary from them; but the
 ‘Words utter’d by the Minister are a set Form to
 ‘them, from which they must not and cannot de-
 ‘part without ceasing at that very Moment to join
 ‘with him, and consequently breaking off the pub-
 ‘lic Worship of God.

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 ‘Tis true, the set Form which the People do in
 ‘such a case use, was conceiv’d *extempore*; but yet
 ‘when once ’tis utter’d, ’tis most undeniably a set
 ‘Form. Tho’ ’twas no set Form before the Utte-
 ‘rance, yet ’tis a set Form after it. For let us sup-
 ‘pose, that that very Prayer which the Minister
 ‘conceives *extempore*, and in which the People join,
 ‘were taken in Writing by some Person present;
 ‘and that the Person who took it in Writing, should
 ‘afterwards use it in twenty different Places, and
 ‘perhaps as long as he lives. In this Case ’tis gran-
 ‘ted, that the Prayer taken in Writing was no set
 ‘Form to him that conceiv’d it *extempore*; but
 ‘yet

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‘yet nothing can be more plain, than that ‘tis a set
‘Form afterwards to that Person, who having taken
‘it in Writing uses it often, either repeating it by
‘Heart, or reading it out of a Paper. And where is
‘the difference, as to its being a set Form to him that
‘did not conceive it, whether he offers it to God as
‘his own, immediately after the Utterance of it, as
‘soon as ever he can catch it from the Conceiver’s
‘Mouth, in the very same Moment in which he
‘hears it; or whether he keeps it in Writing by him
‘for the Space of an Hour, a Month, or a Year, be-
‘fore he offers it to God as his own? For the
‘Words of that Prayer conceiv’d *extempore* by the
‘Minister, are as much fix’d, and consequently
‘become as truly a set Form, the first Moment
‘they are utter’d; as they are or can be seven Years
‘after.

‘Nay, that Prayer which is at first conceiv’d *ex-
‘tempore*, may, if taken in Writing or retain’d in
‘Memory, be afterwards a set Form even to him that
‘conceiv’d it *extempore*. Because, tho’ when he
‘was at liberty to chuse or alter what Words he plea-
‘sed, it was not a set Form to him; yet if he after-
‘wards ties himself up to use those very Words again,
‘which he formerly utter’d *extempore*, those Words do
‘then become a set Form to him. For whether the
‘set Form were compos’d by a Man’s self, or by some
‘other Person; whether it were compos’d *extempore*,
‘or took up much time in the Composition; ‘tis a set
‘Form notwithstanding, when once ‘tis compos’d,
‘and the Words are fix’d and unalterable.

‘Nor can it be objected, that a Prayer conceiv’d
‘*extempore* by the Minister, is not a set Form to the
‘People, because ‘tis wholly new to them, and they
‘join in it as soon as they hear it. For let us sup-
‘pose, that a Man should happen to come into a Place,
‘C where.

18 *What is meant by joint Prayer.* Chap. II.

where some Person was repeating by heart some set Form of Prayer which he had learnt out of a printed Book, and which this Man had never heard or known before; and that this Man should immediately join in the set Form of Prayer so repeated, not knowing but that the Person repeating it did then conceive it *extempore*. 'Tis plain, that the set Form of Prayer so repeated, is wholly new to the Man that occasionally comes in; and he joins in it as soon as he hears it. But can it be imagin'd, that that which was most certainly a set Form of Prayer before this Man occasionally came in, and which perhaps was compos'd an hundred Years since; should cease to be a set Form of Prayer upon his coming in and joining in it? and that for no other reason, but merely because 'tis wholly new to this Man, and he joins in it as soon as he hears it? Surely no. For that which is once a set Form, cannot but remain such, as long as the Words thereof do continue the same they were when they first became a set Form.

If once the Words of a Prayer are fix'd at all, they are a set Form; and they cannot be used and join'd in otherwise than as a set Form, if they are at all us'd and join'd in after they are once fix'd. Nor can their being new to the Person that hears them, and joins in them as soon as he hears them, make them become unfixt and no set Form, which were fix'd and a set Form before that Person heard them and join'd in them. For the very Essence of a set Form consists in this, that the Words thereof are fix'd and certain, that it consists of such Words and no other; and this a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, when once 'tis utter'd for the People to join in, most evidently does; and therefore 'tis a set Form to the People, tho' it be wholly new to them, and

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'and they join in it as soon as they hear it. 'Tis, if
'you please, a new set Form; but yet 'tis a set Form,
'tho' it be new to a Person that never heard or read
'the same before.

'But, tho' the People who join in the Prayer
'conceiv'd *extempore* by the Minister, do pray in a
'set Form; yet do they pray *extempore* notwith-
'standing. For he who offers up a Prayer to God,
'of which he knew not one Word before-hand,
'does most certainly pray *extempore*, if there be
'any such thing as praying *extempore* in the World.
'Now the People, who join in the Prayer conceiv'd
'*extempore* by the Minister, do offer up a Prayer
'to God, of which they knew not one Word be-
'fore-hand; And consequently they pray *extempore*.

'Wherefore, 1. there is a great deal of diffe-
'rence between praying *extempore*, and conceiving
'a Prayer *extempore*. For, tho' he that conceives
'a Prayer *extempore*, does also pray *extempore*; yet
'he who prayeth *extempore*, does not alwaies con-
'ceive a Prayer *extempore*. For I have shewn, that
'that Man who does not himself conceive the Prayer
'*extempore*, but joins in a Prayer conceiv'd *extem-*
'*pore* by another, does pray *extempore* notwithstand-
'ing, because he joins in that Prayer which the
'other conceives, immediately after the Utterance
'of it, as soon as ever he can catch it from the Con-
'ceiver's Mouth. 2. Praying *extempore*, and pray-
'ing in a set Form, are by no means inconsistent;
'it being very possible for a Man to pray *extempore*,
'tho' he uses a set Form of Prayer. Because he may
'join *extempore* in the use of a set Form, either new-
'ly conceiv'd *extempore* by another, or which (tho'
'it were compos'd a thousand Years before) he ne-
'ver heard or knew any thing of, 'till that very
'time when he actually joins in it.

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‘ Now from what has been said, it appears very
 ‘ plainly, that there are two sorts of set Forms of
 ‘ Prayer, *viz.* 1. Such as are compos’d *before*, 2.
 ‘ Such as are compos’d *at*, the time of their being
 ‘ offer’d up to God. For Prayers conceiv’d *extem-*
 ‘ *pore* are then compos’d by the Conceiver, when he
 ‘ actually offers them up to God. And those Prayers,
 ‘ as I have shewn, are set Forms to those who join
 ‘ in them; and consequently they are such set Forms,
 ‘ as are compos’d *at* the time of their being offer’d
 ‘ up to God. But ’tis granted on all Hands, that
 ‘ such set Forms as are compos’d *before* the time of
 ‘ their being offer’d up to God, are not conceiv’d
 ‘ *extempore*.

‘ This Distinction is of very great use; and
 ‘ therefore I hope ’twill be duly regarded by the
 ‘ Reader. And so much the rather do I desire it,
 ‘ because these precompos’d set Forms of Prayer,
 ‘ that is, set Forms of Prayer compos’d *before* the
 ‘ time of their being offer’d up to God, have in
 ‘ common Discourse, and even in the most accurate
 ‘ Writings, almost engross’d to themselves the Name
 ‘ of set Forms of Prayer. Whereas I have shewn,
 ‘ that Prayers conceiv’d *extempore* (and which con-
 ‘ sequently are not precompos’d set Forms) are real-
 ‘ ly set Forms of Prayer to those who join in them;
 ‘ and consequently do as truly deserve the Name of
 ‘ set Forms of Prayer, as even precompos’d set Forms
 ‘ themselves.

Thus then it appears, that a joint Prayer either
 may be a precompos’d set Form of Prayer, or it may
 not be such. I do not say, that a joint Prayer is
 equally acceptable to God and agreeable to his Will,
 whether it be a precompos’d set Form, or no: but
 I say, ’tis possible in the Nature of the Thing, that
 a Man may (in what manner or degree of Perfe-
 ction

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tion will be shewn in due time; but, I say, 'tis possible that a Man may join in a Prayer, and consequently that a joint Prayer may be, either precompos'd, or not. 1. I say, a joint Prayer may be a precompos'd set Form. For 'tis notorious, that many Persons may jointly offer up the Lord's Prayer, for Instance; and for the same Reason they may as well offer up any other Form, which was compos'd before the time of their offering it. 2. A joint Prayer may be such as was not precompos'd. Because a Man may join in a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*. 'Tis true, when a Man joins in a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, 'tis a set Form to him that joins in it, tho' 'tis not a set Form to him that conceives it. But a Prayer which is conceiv'd *extempore* at the time of offering it, neither is, nor can be a precompos'd set Form, either to the Conceiver himself, or to him that joins with the Conceiver in it.

Now 'tis without all doubt the Duty of Christians to practise joint Prayer; that is, they are most certainly bound to meet together in one and the same Place, and to speak to God the same Matter of Prayer, at the same Time, in the same Method, and in the same Words. I do by no means say, that all the Prayers they offer, must be joint ones. For 'tis very certain, that they not only may, but must pray alone by themselves; and 'tis also very lawful for them, at proper times, to pray each Man alone, even in the House of God. Thus the ancient *Jews*, and the primitive Christians very frequently did; and we our selves do upon some Occasions very justly retain the same Custom. But what I say, is this, that 'tis the Duty of all Christians, to pray not only alone by themselves, either in their Closets or in the Church, but also to join together in offering up the very same Form of Prayer, at the same

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Time,

22 *What is meant by joint Prayer.* Chap. II.

Time, and in the same Place. How often, or in what Places, this ought to be done, is besides the present Inquiry. But without all doubt 'tis their Duty to do thus in God's House, which is appointed for public Worship. Again, whether that Form of Prayer which they jointly offer up, ought to be precompos'd, or conceiv'd *extempore*, will appear hereafter. What I at present assert, is only this, that one and the same Form of Prayer (whether precompos'd, or conceiv'd *extempore*) ought to be jointly offer'd by them.

And for the Proof of this, I appeal to the common Sense and Practice of all Christians. The very Design of joint Prayer is this, that the whole Congregation may unite in that Action, and pray together, as if they were but one single Person. And this they can't do, unless they unite in offering up one and the same Form, as the joint Prayer of them all. And thus the Christian Church has in all Ages unanimously practis'd. As the respective Congregations have join'd in singing the very same Psalms; so have they join'd in offering the very same Prayers. And accordingly the joint Prayers both of the Members of the establish'd Church, and of the Dissenters, are offer'd up in the Name of the whole respective Congregations. *We beseech thee, we pray thee, we confess to thee, we bless thee*, and the like, are usual Phrases with them both. And such Phrases do plainly import, that the whole Congregation ought to unite in that very Form, wherein such Phrases are contain'd; and that what is said by one in the Name of the rest, ought (at least mentally) to be personally said by each Member of the Congregation.

It may be thought perhaps, that I seem to lay too much stress upon speaking the very same
Words

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Words or Form of Prayer; and that a Number of Men may truly and properly be said to join in Prayer, and jointly to offer up the same Prayer, altho' there may be some small Difference as to the Words or Form. To this I answer, that Men cannot be said to join in the same Prayer, unless the Words or Form which they speak to God (either vocally or mentally) be the same in the main, and there be no considerable Difference. A small Variation may sometimes happen without any great Prejudice or Hindrance. For Instance, if the Minister (whether in a precompos'd set Form, or a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*) should say, *O Lord, grant these our Requests*; one of the Congregation may chance by a Mistake to say, *O God, grant us these Requests*. In these and the like Instances there is no great harm. They do not affect the Body or Substance of the Prayer so much, as to change it, or make it a different Form. But then it must be remember'd, that we ought to keep as close to the Words or Form as we can; and that the more closely we keep thereto, the more perfectly we join in the same Prayer. And indeed Men will naturally do this, if they do truly join in Prayer at all; whether the Prayer be precompos'd, or no. For it will cost 'em so much trouble to alter the Form on Purpose, that it will hinder their Devotion. And therefore all the Difference as to Words, will be only casual, and accidental, and such as they could not well help; and consequently small and inconsiderable.

In a Word, in joint Actions the whole Congregation acts as one Person. Now one Person does the same Action so, as that there is in that Action no difference from its self in any Respect whatsoever. And the more exactly every Member of the Congregation does the same Action, and the less difference

24 *What is meant by joint Prayer.* Chap. II.

rence there is between the personal Performance of each Member of the Congregation in that joint Action; the more perfect that joint Action is, and the more truly and properly it deserves to be call'd the joint Action of the Congregation. Accordingly in joint Prayer, as I have already said, the whole Congregation is to pray or to speak to God, as one Man. Now when one Man speaks to God, he speaks exactly and without any difference, not only at the same Time, in the same Place, concerning the same Things, and in the same Method, but also in the same Form of Words with himself. And consequently the less the Difference is (not only in other Respects, but also) in the Words or Form of each Person's Speech to God, the more nearly it resembles the Prayer of a single Person, and the more truly and properly it deserves the Name of a joint Prayer.

But whether the Form of Prayer, in which the whole Congregation joins, be a precompos'd set Form, or a Form conceiv'd *extempore*, yet still it is to be remember'd, that all joint Prayer is a joint speaking to God the same Form of Prayer. And consequently whosoever is present, when a Prayer is offer'd up to God, and does not at the same time with the rest actually, and in his own Person speak to God (either vocally or mentally) that very set Form, which the Person who officiates does at that time offer up to God, in the Name of the Congregation; That Man cannot possibly be said to join in that Prayer. For as I have fully prov'd, Prayer is speaking to God. And therefore, tho' he be present when others do speak to God, yet if a Man do not himself, actually and in his own Person, speak to God, he cannot be said to pray at all. For Prayer is a personal Action, and must of necessity be

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be perform'd by the Man himself. Nor can that Man, who hears another speak to God, and does not himself speak to God, actually and in his own Person; that Man, I say, can no more be said to pray, than he who hears another Man converse with a Neighbor, and does not himself speak one Syllable to that Neighbor, can be said, because he is present, to converse or discourse with that Neighbor. You see therefore, that no Man does pray, but he who does as truly and properly speak to God, as in Discourse with his Neighbor he speaks to Man. And therefore, as he who does only hear what one Man discourses to another, cannot properly be said to speak to that Man; so he, who does only hear a Prayer, cannot be said to pray to God. And if a Man, that does no more than hear a Prayer, cannot be said to pray to God, and does in reality not pray at all; then 'tis most manifest, that he cannot be said to join in Prayer; unless you will assert, that a Man may join in Prayer, that is, offer up the very same set Form of Prayer together with others, and yet at the same time not pray at all.

But this Matter, because it is of the greatest Importance, and because (I fear) Men are very frequently and very dangerously mistaken concerning it, deserves a little farther Illustration.

Suppose we then, that half a Dozen Persons or more, are met together in the House of God. The Minister vocally speaks a Prayer to God in the Name of the Congregation, which is either pre-compos'd, or at that time conceiv'd *extempore* by him. The People hear, and understand every Syllable that is spoken by the Minister, and they approve the Things that he saies. I say, all this may be done, altho' not one single Person in the Congregation

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gregation does pray at the same time together with the Minister. For if twenty Men meet together in a Room, and two of 'em discourse for half an Hour together, and all the rest hold their Peace; In this case all the Company may understand every Syllable that is spoken by those two Men, and they may approve whatsoever those two Men do say; and yet no Man will conclude from thence, that all the Company do discourse: Because 'tis suppos'd, that only two Persons do discourse, and all the rest do hold their Peace. Even so in the case of Prayer; altho' a Man understands every Syllable that is spoken to God in Prayer, and approves what is said; yet 'tis possible, that at that very time he may not pray notwithstanding. For as the understanding and approving the Discourse of one Man to another, cannot make that Discourse to be my own Discourse, if I at the same time do not speak one Word: so the understanding and approving what is spoken to God in Prayer, cannot make that Prayer to be my own Prayer, nor can I be said upon that Account to join in that Prayer, or even to pray at all; if I at the same time do not actually and in my own Person, speak that very set Form of Prayer to God, which the Minister then speaks to him, and which I understand, and approve, whilst I hear the Minister speak it. In such a case therefore a Man does only hear a Prayer, and not pray.

But then, if those Persons, who are present when a Minister offers up a Prayer in the Name of the Congregation, do make that Prayer their own by speaking every Part thereof to God actually and in their own Persons; if they do not barely hear what the Minister speaks, but speak all the same things themselves; in this case they may truly and properly be said to pray, and to join with the Minister

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ster in that particular Prayer. Because they do jointly offer up and speak to God (either vocally or mentally) that very Prayer, which the Minister at that time speaks to God in their hearing. For if the Minister saies, *Almighty and most merciful Father*; so do they also, either vocally or mentally, say, *Almighty and most merciful Father*. If he saies, *We have err'd and stray'd from thy Ways like lost Sheep*; so do they also, either vocally or mentally, say, *We have err'd and stray'd from thy Ways like lost Sheep*. And so they proceed in all other parts of the Minister's Prayer, and continue to speak to God, either vocally or mentally, those things which the Minister speaks in their Name, and in their hearing. They speak to God as truly and properly, tho' perhaps not so loudly, as the Minister himself; and consequently they do truly and properly pray; and must be allow'd to do more than barely hear a Prayer. Nor can any Man be truly said and accounted to join in Prayer, who does not do thus, and keep to that Practice which I have describ'd. And as far, and as much, as he falls short of this in any Part of the Divine Service; so far, and so much, is he deficient in his Duty; and so far, and so much, does he cease to join in that Prayer, which the Minister offers in the Name of the Congregation.

From what has been said it plainly appears, how greatly those Persons are mistaken, who believe, that they have throughly discharg'd the great Duty of joint Prayer, if they have attentively heard, and heartily approv'd, what the Minister speaks in Prayer; and in the Conclusion thereof do fervently say an *Amen*, and thereby declare to Almighty God, that they do make the foregoing set Form of Prayer their own, by acknowledging, desiring, and returning Thanks for, all the several Particulars therein

contain'd. These Persons surely do never consider, that a Man does no longer pray, than whilst he speaks to God; and consequently, that if he does only listen to the Prayer, whilst the Minister is offering it up (perhaps during the Space of a full quarter of an Hour, or more) and does not himself in his own Person actually offer up, and (either vocally or mentally) speak the same Prayer; he is all that time not praying or joining in Prayer, but hearing a Prayer only: and that he is no longer truly praying or joining in Prayer, than whilst he is saying the *Amen* at the end, which is not the Space of the tenth part of a Minute. So that whereas he ought to have been praying (suppose) for a full quarter of an Hour, he very cunningly excuses himself from the intense Vigor of Devotion all that while, and thinks to put off Almighty God with a short Address of the tenth part of a Minute long. These Persons would be very unwilling, that God should cut them short in Blessings both Spiritual and Temporal, as much as they do cut him short in Worship. And yet they must, unless they repent and amend, expect such Treatment from him. For 'tis their Duty, not only to approve the whole Prayer, but also to speak the whole of it to God; to make it their own, not by a bare summary Expression at the end of it, but by a personal Expression of every part of it; not only to conclude it, but also to go quite thro' it, to begin and end with the Minister, and to join with him in speaking themselves (either vocally or mentally) whatsoever he speaks in their Name and hearing.

But it may be said, that the Minister or other Person that officiates, is the Mouth of the Congregation; and what need is there then, that every Member of the Congregation should, actually and in

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in his own Person, speak to God (either vocally or mentally) the same Prayer which the Minister or other Person that officiates, who is their common Mouth, speaks to God in their Name? To this I answer, that the Minister is indeed, in one Sense, the Mouth of the Congregation. For whensoever any Number of Persons do join in Prayer, there is at least one Person who vocally speaks the Prayer to God. I say, there is *at least one Person* that does so. For many times there are more than one, who do vocally speak the Prayer; as when in the Establish'd Church the whole Congregation does vocally say the Lord's Prayer. But tho' all the rest be silent, yet common Sense, and the Nature of the thing, do necessarily require, that at least one Person's Voice should be heard, with which all the rest may mentally join. And that Person who speaks alone, may be properly enough call'd the Mouth of the Congregation; that is, he is the Mouth which does vocally pronounce the Prayer, and speak it aloud, in that Congregation. But then, tho' the Minister or other Person that officiates, is in this Sense the Mouth of the Congregation; yet he is not so their Mouth, as that every Member thereof is not oblig'd, actually and in his own Person, to speak the Prayer to God. For there is a speaking of the Mind as well as of the Mouth. And we may affirm, that there is a figurative Mouth of the Mind, as certainly as there is a proper Mouth of the Body. Every Member of the Congregation therefore, *may* (and sometimes does) vocally speak the Prayer; and is *a Mouth in*, tho' not *the Mouth of*, the Congregation. But every Member *must*, of absolute Necessity, actually and in his own Person, speak the Prayer either vocally or mentally; and consequently is, and cannot but be, his own Mouth to God

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God (tho' not in a proper, yet) in a figurative Sense. For if he does not speak the Prayer to God, with what we may call the Mouth of his Mind, by directing it to God, and by a personal (tho' silent) Expression of what the Minister speaks aloud; he cannot possibly be said to join in Prayer: for he does not pray at all, but only hears the Prayer of the Minister or other Person that officiates.

But it may be said, that a Congregation may pray to God, tho' only one Person speaks to him; even as a Body of Men (for Instance, either House of Parliament) may address a Prince, by appointing a certain Man to offer their Address, and thereby making it their joint Act and Deed. To this I answer, that every Address is not speaking. For one Man, or many Men, may address a Person at a distance, or by Letter, or by a Messenger, or by one that is deputed by common Consent. But no Man will say, that those who address a Person at a distance, or by a Letter, or by a Messenger, or by one deputed by common Consent, do themselves truly and properly, that is, personally speak to him whom they address. For surely none of these Objectors can be weak enough to imagin, that a whole Body of Men can be said truly and properly to speak to the Prince, when only one of them reads or speaks the Address, and the rest do not move their Lips.

There is therefore oftentimes a great Difference between addressing, and true and proper speaking. A Person that addresses another, may do it by personal Speech: but every Person that addresses another, does not do it by personal Speech. For a Person may address without personally speaking. And if he does so address, 'tis his Act and Deed without personally speaking: but it can't be thought his personal

Chap. II. *What is meant by joint Prayer.* 31

sonal Speech to that Person, unless he himself does actually and personally speak it. Now Prayer is truly and properly speaking to God. 'Tis not barely an Address, but an Address by personal Speech. Nor can any Man be said to pray, unless he addresses God, not by another, but by himself. And in joint Prayer, the Action both of the Minister or other Person that officiates, and also of every Member of the Congregation, is (with respect to God) the very same. The one prays as truly and properly as the other: because the one speaks to God, as truly and properly as the other. I confess, the Person that officiates, may speak vocally, when the others do not: but yet they do all of 'em truly and properly speak to God notwithstanding, the one as much as the other; because (with respect to God) vocal and mental Speech are the very same, and are heard and understood alike.

I confess, that in the Holy Scriptures, and in common Discourse, a whole Multitude is sometimes said to speak a thing, which was personally spoken by him only, whom they made their common Mouth. But then, this is never said, except in those Cases, when the whole Multitude could not conveniently speak, every Man in his own Person. For (as I have (c) elsewhere observ'd) 'tis impossible in the 'Nature of the Thing for one Man to converse with 'a whole Company at one and the same time. 'For he cannot distinctly hear their several Discourses all together; and therefore they must of necessity, either speak their Minds one after another, 'or make one Man their common Mouth, and order him to speak in the Name of the Company. 'And

(c) *Brief History*, Ch. 7. p. 80. 81.

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‘ And when the Business of a whole Company is
 ‘ not different, but the very same; ’tis necessary
 ‘ they should make one Man their common Mouth,
 ‘ to prevent the Impertinency of infinite needless
 ‘ Repetitions of one and the same thing. And this
 ‘ is, and ever has been the ordinary Practice of all
 ‘ the World, and the Necessity of it arises from the
 ‘ Nature of the Thing, and from the Infirmary of
 ‘ Mankind, who are not capable of attending to ma-
 ‘ ny Discourses at the same Instant. And therefore
 ‘ when one Man converses with a Multitude by their
 ‘ common Mouth, ’tis usual with our selves, and
 ‘ also in the Scripture Phrase, to represent what is
 ‘ said by that common Mouth, as spoken by them
 ‘ all. But what is all this to the Case of Prayer?
 God can hear and attend to the greatest Multitude
 at one and the same time. He has none of those
 Infirmities, which Man is burden’d with; and
 therefore ’tis Nonsense to think, that God will di-
 spense with our speaking personally to him, and that
 he will accept of the personal Speech of a single
 Man in the Name of the whole Congregation; when
 the whole Congregation are all of them equally ca-
 pable of speaking personally to him (either vocally
 or mentally) and can each Man for himself, and e-
 very Man together, jointly offer up the same Prayer.
 ’Tis true, if God could not hear and attend to a
 whole Congregation at once, they might then think
 themselves excus’d from personal Speech in Prayer:
 but since the Case is otherwise, and they are all e-
 qually commanded to pray, and to join in Prayer;
 therefore the whole Congregation is bound to unite
 their Speeches, and all of them in their own Per-
 sons actually to speak (either vocally or mentally)
 and jointly to offer up the same Prayer. And if
 they do not do thus, they do not join in Prayer.

Thus

Thus then have I shewn what is meant by joint Prayer. 'Tis the Action of many Persons offering up to God at the same Time, and in the same Place, the same Form of Prayer, whether precompos'd or conceiv'd *extempore*.

C H A P, III.

That the Practice of the ancient Jews, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, obliges us to perform the Duty of joint Prayer by the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with.

II. **I** Promis'd to shew, that the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* hinders Devotion, and consequently displeases God; whereas the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion, and consequently is commanded by God.

Now it appears from what has been already said, that a joint Prayer may be either conceiv'd *extempore*, or a precompos'd set Form. And 'tis manifest from the very Nature of the thing, that a precompos'd set Form may be, either such as the Congregation which is to join therein, is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; or else such as the said Congregation is not accusom'd to, nor thoroughly acquainted with. It may be question'd therefore, whether we ought rather to join in Prayers

conceiv'd *extempore*, or in precompos'd set Forms: and (if in precompos'd set Forms) whether in such as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; or in such as the Congregation is not accustom'd to, nor thoroughly acquainted with.

'Tis notorious, that Men have entertain'd very different Notions concerning these Matters; and their Disputes occasion'd thereby have greatly disturb'd the Peace of this Part of the Christian World. Some have very earnestly contended for the Performance of joint Prayer by the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*. Others have with no less Zeal contended for the Performance of it by the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. I confess there may be also a third Opinion, *viz.* that it ought to be perform'd by the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is not accustom'd to, nor thoroughly acquainted with. But tho' 'tis possible there may be such an Opinion, yet I do not find that it was ever profess'd and maintain'd; and therefore I shall not take any further notice of it, in this Place. But every body knows, that the two former Opinions have had a vast Number of Advocates, who have espous'd 'em with great warmth, and endeavor'd to support 'em by a great Variety of Arguments.

Now my own Opinion is plainly and sincerely this. I am thoroughly persuaded, that the Duty of joint Prayer ought in any wise to be perform'd by the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. I say, I am thoroughly persuaded, that such a Performance of joint Prayer is not only very lawfull, and what we are able to vindicate;
but

but also necessary, and what God expects at our Hands.

The reason of my Opinion is this. I cannot but think, that the Duty of joint Prayer ought to be perform'd after the best manner. For as Dr. Owen very truly (d) saies, *Every one who prays either by himself, and for himself, or with others and for them, is oblig'd, as to all the Uses, Properties, and Circumstances of Prayer, to pray as well as he is able. For by the Light of Nature every one is oblig'd in all Instances to serve God with his Best. The Confirmation and Exemplification hereof, was one end of the Institution of Sacrifices under the Old Testament. For it was ordain'd in them, that the chief and best of every thing was to be offer'd unto God. Neither the Nature of God, nor our own Duty towards him, will admit, that we should expect any Admittance with him, unless our Design be to serve him with the Best that we have, both for Matter and Manner. So is the Mind of God himself declar'd in the Prophets. If you offer the blind for Sacrifice, is it not Evil? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not Evil? Ye brought that which was torn, and that which was lame and sick. Should I accept this at your Hands, saith the Lord? But curs'd be the Deceiver, who has in his Flock a Male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. For I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts; and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen.*

Now after the most impartial and diligent Inquiry, and after the most mature and attentive Consideration, I cannot but firmly believe, that we do then perform the Duty of joint Prayer after the

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best

(d) *Discourse of the Work of the Spirit in Prayer, Preface, p. 10. Lond. 1682.*

best Manner, when we join in the Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. And, I think, I can give such Reasons for this my stedfast Belief, as are not only of great weight, but really unanswerable.

One Reason is this. I have (e) elsewhere prov'd, that the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, never join'd in any Prayers but precompos'd set Forms only; and that those precompos'd set Forms in which they join'd, were such as the respective Congregations were accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. Now I cannot persuade my self, but that that way of performing the Duty of joint Prayer, which the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, so universally observ'd; was not only tolerable, but also the very best. For surely they knew what was the best way of doing it, and had Piety and Zeal enough to engage 'em to make use of that way which they judg'd such. Nor can any Man, I think, who has the least spark of Modesty left, pretend to find out a better way, than that which is recommended by the constant and uninterrupted Practice of those, whose concurrent Opinion and Judgment cannot be withstood or gainsaid. Wherefore, tho' there were no other Reason for my preferring this Method of performing the Duty of joint Prayer; nay, tho' there were some plausible Objections against it, and some Difficulties relating to it, which I could not fairly get over: yet the joint Practice and Authority of the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians,

(e) In the Brief History before mention'd.

ans, are of such Force with me, that I could not but account the Method they always us'd, the very best, and consequently such as we are oblig'd to observe, notwithstanding what Appearance of Arguments and specious Pretences there might be to the contrary.

But this is not my only Reason; tho' this alone is a very sufficient one. For tho' we could not pretend to know, what Method the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, took for the Performance of joint Prayer; tho' we had not the least Information concerning it, but were left utterly in the Dark, and could not so much as guess, much less determine, whether they join'd in the Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*, or in the Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the respective Congregations were accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; I say, tho' we had not the least ground of an Argument from their joint Practice and Authority; yet the Consideration of the Nature of the thing, puts the Matter (in my Opinion) past all Question.

For nothing seems to me more evident, than that the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*, hinders Devotion; and that the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion. These things, I say, do appear to me so evidently true, that if we had no other Light whatsoever, yet I could not but conclude from these Principles, that we do then perform the Duty of joint Prayer after the best manner, when we join in the Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with.

And if these Principles did appear as evidently true to others, as they do to my self: I cannot doubt, but they would draw the very same Conclusion from 'em; and be firmly persuaded, that the Performance of the Duty of joint Prayer by the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with, is not only lawful, and what we are able to vindicate; but also necessary, and what God expects at our Hands; because it is the best way of performing it.

These Principles therefore I will endeavor to establish. I say, I will endeavor to shew with all possible Plainness, that the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* does most certainly hinder Devotion; and that the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion,

C H A P. IV.

That 'tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every Part of a Prayer conceiv'd extempore; whereas the Congregation may without any Difficulty join in every Part of such a precompos'd set Form, as they are accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with.

IN order to this, I shall shew, that diverse insufferable Evils do necessarily attend the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*, none of which do attend the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms,

as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. For,

First, 'Tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every Part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*; whereas they may, without any Difficulty, join in every Part of such a precompos'd set Form, as they are accustom'd to, and throughly acquainted with.

First, I say, 'tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every Part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*. That this may very plainly appear, I desire the Reader to remember (what I have already fully prov'd) that no Man can be said to join in a Prayer, unless he does actually and in his own Person (either vocally or mentally) speak to God that Prayer, which is offer'd up by the Minister or other Person that officiates. Now nothing can be more evident, than that 'tis impossible for the Congregation, actually, and in their own Persons, to speak to God (either vocally or mentally) every Part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*; if the following Particulars be consider'd; *viz.*

1. That no Man can speak to God any Part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore* by another Person, before he hears that Part from the Conceiver's Mouth. This is so manifest, that it needs no Proof.

2. That no Man can, at one and the same time, both attend to what is spoken *extempore* by the Person that officiates, and actually speak himself, in his own Person, the very same thing to Almighty God. And the Reason of this is exceedingly plain. For when a Man attends to what another saies, his Soul is directed to that other Person, and is as it were fix'd upon him: but when a Man does actually and in his own Person, speak himself to God, his Soul is directed to God, and is as it were fix'd upon God. Now a Man cannot have his Soul directed to two

such different Beings at the same time, and as it were fix'd upon them both at once. So that whilst he is attending to what is spoken by Man, he cannot himself be personally speaking to God; and whilst he himself is personally speaking to God, he cannot be attending to what is spoken by Man. And if he cannot both attend to what is spoken by Man, and also personally speak to God at the same time; then 'tis plain, that he cannot at the same time both attend to what is spoken by Man, and also himself actually and personally speak the same things to God. For if he cannot speak at all to God at that time; certainly he cannot speak the same things to God, which he is then hearing another Man speak.

Wherefore, when a Congregation joins in a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, each Person must first hear some part of the Prayer, and then afterwards they themselves must speak the same part of the Prayer to God. They must alternately, first attend to what is spoken, and then speak it themselves.

For otherwise 'tis impossible for 'em to join in Prayer with him that officiates. For if they do not at all speak those things to God, which he that officiates does utter *extempore*; then they do not join in Prayer at all. And if they do not attend to what is spoken by him that officiates, they cannot tell what he speaks to God, and consequently cannot speak it together with him. And therefore, since it has been shewn, that they cannot at one and the same time both attend to the Conceiver of the Prayer, and also speak those things to God which the Conceiver utters; there is a necessity of their doing the one after the other, that is, they must alternately attend to Man, and speak to God. They must by turns,
1. hear what the Conceiver pours forth, and 2. pour
the

Chap. IV. *conceiv'd extempore.* 41

the same things forth themselves. They must first receive from him that officiates, what they are to say to God; and then they must afterwards personally say to God, what they have receiv'd from him that officiates.

That what has been said, may be the more clear and intelligible; let us suppose that the following Prayer were conceiv'd *extempore* by the Person that officiates, *viz.*

O most glorious Lord God, who dwellest in the Heavens, and art infinite in Perfections; look down, we most humbly beseech thee, from the Throne of thy Glory, and behold us sinful Dust and Ashes. Be thou graciously pleas'd to extend thy Mercies towards us, in the full and free Pardon of all our manifold Sins and Iniquities, which we in the whole Course of our Lives have been guilty of. We confess, O Lord, with Shame and Confusion of Face, that we have grievously provok'd thee by our repeated Crimes; and that we do justly deserve to feel the Severity of thy avenging Wrath, and to suffer the Punishments, both Temporal and Eternal, which are due for our numberless and inexcusable Offences. But, O Lord our God, thou waitest to be gracious, and hast sent thy Son into the World to be a Propitiation for our Sins. He dy'd upon the Cross to atone thy Wrath, and to purchase a Pardon of thy Justice for us. For his Sake therefore, &c.

Let us now see and consider the Practice of joining in this Prayer. The Conceiver is suppos'd to utter it *extempore*; and consequently the Congregation can't possibly speak to God any part of it, 'till they have caught it from the Conceiver's Mouth. Now when they have caught any thing from the Conceiver's Mouth, they may speak it themselves to God, either by repeating a whole Sentence together,

ther, or else by repeating only single Clauses or smaller Parts of a Sentence at once. Now I shall distinctly consider the Practice of joining in the Prayer aforesaid each of these Ways.

2. 1. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

1. Then I say, they may repeat a whole Sentence together. Now the first Sentence of the foregoing Prayer is this, *O most glorious Lord God, who dwellest in the Heavens, and art infinite in Perfections; look down, we most humbly beseech thee, from the Throne of thy Glory, and behold us sinful Dust and Ashes:* This Sentence therefore they cannot speak themselves to God, 'till they have heard the Conceiver say the whole of it. Nor can they themselves speak to God the next Sentence, viz. *Be thou graciously pleas'd to extend thy Mercies towards us, in the full and free Pardon of our manifold Sins and Iniquities, which we in the whole Course of our Lives have been guilty of;* 'till they have heard the Conceiver utter it; and then they may begin to do it.

2. They may repeat only single Clauses or smaller Parts of a Sentence at once. And in this case none of 'em can say, *O most glorious Lord God;* 'till they have heard the Conceiver say, *O most glorious Lord God.* Nor can any of 'em say, *who dwellest in the Heavens;* 'till they have heard the Conceiver say, *who dwellest in the Heavens.* And so on to the End of the suppos'd Prayer.

But then, because they cannot at the same time, and in the same Instant, both attend to the Conceiver, and speak to God the same things which they hear the Conceiver utter; therefore the Conceiver must have made an end of speaking each part, before any Person in the Congregation can begin to speak it himself to Almighty God. For Instance, the Conceiver must actually have made an end of saying, *O most glorious Lord God,* before any one of

of the Congregation can begin to say, *O most glorious Lord God*: and the Conceiver must actually have made an end of saying, *who dwellest in the Heavens*; before any one of the Congregation can begin to say, *who dwellest in the Heavens*. Or else the Conceiver must have made an end of saying the first whole Sentence, before any of the Congregation can begin to speak that whole Sentence to God. And the Conceiver must have made an end of saying the second whole Sentence, before any of the Congregation can begin to speak to God one Syllable of it. And so on to the end of the suppos'd Prayer.

I know, 'tis commonly pretended, that the Soul is very quick in its Operations; and that a Man may assent to a Prayer, and be greatly affected thereby, as soon as ever he hears it; and that he can make it his own, and speak it himself to God, in an Instant; and consequently that a Man may both attend to a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, and also speak it himself to God, in the very same Instant of time. This Pretence therefore must be very carefully examin'd, and the Falshood of it fully and clearly discover'd; especially because I am confident, that a very great Number of well meaning Persons are most dangerously deceiv'd thereby.

Now I grant, that the Soul of Man is indeed very quick in its Operations: but then we must at the same time take care, that we do not think the Soul to be more quick in its Operations, than it really is. It must be acknowledg'd, that if the Matter discours'd of be level to a Man's Understanding, and clearly and distinctly express'd; his Soul will (generally speaking) apprehend it, and is capable of assenting to it, or dissenting from it, or of desiring and longing for what is mention'd in it, &c. as fast as
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the Ears can hear and receive it. And accordingly, if a Congregation hears any Man conceive a Prayer *extempore*; if that Prayer be so worded as that the Congregation can fully apprehend the Meaning of the Expressions; and if the Matter thereof be such as they can heartily approve; in this case, I say, the Congregation can, as soon as ever they hear the Prayer, assent to what is said, and be very much mov'd and warm'd thereby; even as when they hear a very intelligible and pathetical Sermon, they can immediately assent to it, and be very much mov'd and warm'd by that Sermon. This, I say, may be done, as soon as the Words are heard; provided what is utter'd, be deliver'd after such a manner, that the Soul can go along with it, that is, provided it be not utter'd with so much Hast and Precipitation, as that the Soul cannot pass on gradually from one thing to another, and distinctly perceive what is spoken. For every Body knows, that a too hasty Delivery may make it as impossible for the Soul to perceive and understand what is said, as the speaking of it in an unknown Tongue.

Wherefore, as quick as the Soul of Man is, yet it can't understand and approve what it hears, in less time than the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation. Because it can't understand and approve it faster than it hears it; and it cannot hear it, so as distinctly to perceive and thoroughly apprehend the Meaning of it, and retain it in Memory, in less time than the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation. And consequently the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation is necessary in order even to the bare Attention, which the Soul must give to a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*. And if the Prayer conceiv'd *extempore* be utter'd after a moderately deliberate manner, it must be own'd, that

that the Souls of the Hearers may, as fast as they hear it, and in the very same Instant, assent to it, and be greatly affected, mov'd and warm'd thereby. And this is most evidently what a great Number of well meaning People call, *making the Prayer their own.*

But let me intreat these Persons to consider, that they may in this sense make a Prayer their own, that is, they may assent to it, and be greatly affected, mov'd and warm'd thereby; nay, they may actually desire the same Things which he that officiates does desire; and be actually conscious of, and wounded for, those Sins which he confesses; and actually have a grateful Sense of the Mercies he returns Thanks for; I say, all this may be, and yet 'tis very possible, that they may not pray all this while. For the very Essence of Prayer (as I have *ie: C7* largely shewn) consists in a Man's speaking to God. *Eng 2: 00* He must personally direct himself to God, and utter such and such Things to him, either vocally or *ergo 2. p. 2* mentally; or else he cannot be said to pray. Now *ie: C7* a Man may most certainly assent to, and be most *ie: 3612* heartily affected, mov'd and warm'd by the Prayer which another Man makes; nay, he may actually desire those Things, which he that officiates does desire; and be actually conscious of, and wounded for, those Sins, which he that officiates does confess; and actually have a grateful Sense of the Mercies, which he that officiates returns Thanks for; I say, all this may be, and yet 'tis very possible, that this Person may not speak one Word to God all this while. For a Man may assent to a Thing, altho' he does not actually direct his Soul to God Almighty, and tell him, that he does assent to it. And he may be affected, mov'd and warm'd at the hearing of those Things which he himself does not speak;

Speak; even as he is affected, mov'd and warm'd by hearing that Sermon, which another preaches, and which he himself does not utter or speak one Syllable of. He may also actually desire Heaven (for Instance) when he hears him that officiates expressing to God his Desires thereof; altho' he himself does not actually tell God at the same time, that he does desire Heav'n. He may be actually conscious of, and wounded for, those Sins which he hears confess'd; altho' he does not actually tell God at the same time, that he is conscious of 'em, and wounded for 'em. And he may have a grateful Sense of the Mercies, which he that officiates returns Thanks for; altho' he does not actually tell God Almighty at the same time, that he is then gratefull for them.

We must therefore carefully distinguish between our assenting to a Prayer; and our personal Declaration of that Assent to God: between our being affected, mov'd, and warm'd; and our personal Declaration of the same to God: between our having Desires rais'd in us; and our personal Declaration to God that we have those Desires rais'd in us: between our being conscious of, and wounded for, the Sins that may be confess'd; and our personal Declaration to God, that we are so conscious and wounded: between our having a gratefull Sense of God's Mercies; and our personal Declaration to God, that we have it. For these things are certainly very different in themselves; and therefore must not be confounded, or mistaken the one for the other.

Now the very Essence of Prayer consists, not in assenting to what another Man speaks in Prayer; nor in being affected, mov'd and warm'd thereby; nor in desiring, being conscious of, or wounded for,

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or having a gratefull Sense of, the things mention'd in the Prayer : but in making a Report of these and the like Matters to God ; in a personal Declaration and Expression of our Assent ; of our being affected, mov'd and warm'd ; of our Desires, Compunction, Resentments, &c. I say, the very Essence of Prayer consists in a personal Declaration and Expression of these and the like Matters to God. And therefore we cannot be said to join in the Prayer of him that officiates, unless we personally speak what he speaks : unless we are not only affected, mov'd and warm'd *by his* speaking ; but are affected, mov'd and warm'd *in our own* speaking : unless when he desires, we personally tell God, that we desire too ; when he expresses his Sorrow, we personally express our own Sorrow too ; when he returns Thanks, we personally do the same also. For as a Man may be present, when a Beggar tells a rich Man a dismal Story ; and may be greatly affected, mov'd and warm'd thereby ; and may wish that the rich Person would relieve that Beggar ; and be heartily glad when he sees an Alms bestow'd upon him ; I say, as all this may be, altho' a Man does not personally speak one Word to the rich Person in that Beggar's behalf : so may a Man be present at a Prayer ; and be greatly affected, mov'd, and warm'd thereby ; and wish that the Prayer may be heard by God, &c. altho' he himself does not personally speak to God (either vocally or mentally) one single Syllable of that Prayer. And in such a case the Man cannot possibly be said to join in Prayer. But then, when a Man speaks, what the Person who officiates does speak ; when together with him, he expresses his own personal Desires, Sorrow, Gratitude, &c. then, and then only, may he

he be truly and properly said to join with him in Prayer.

Now I affirm, that a Congregation cannot possibly do this, at the same time, and in the same Instant, whilst they are attending to the Prayer which is conceiv'd *extempore*. For tho' the Soul be quick in its Operations; yet it can't operate two such different ways at once. It can't at the same time, and in the same Instant, both attend to Man, and speak to God the very same things which it is attending to. It can't both be directed to Man, and directed to God; both be fix'd upon Man, and fix'd upon God. These Operations do manifestly interfere the one with the other, and necessarily call off the Soul the one from the other.

For we must observe and remember, that that Attention which the Soul of Man must of necessity give to a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, before it can make it its own, so as distinctly to perceive and throughly to apprehend the Meaning of it, and retain it so well in Memory, as to be able to lift up its self to God and repeat it; I say, this Attention is not a slight and accidental, but a very close and constant Attention. And such an Attention will certainly imploy the whole Force of the Mind, and take it intirely up. So that the Mind cannot possibly be at leisure for another quite different Operation at the very same Instant.

Again, we must observe and remember, that speaking to God does also require the closest and most constant Application of Soul, and the greatest and most constant Energy of its Operations. For when a Man speaks any thing to God, he must not run it over with so much Hast and Precipitation, as if he did not regard what he said, and was impatient 'till he had done: but he must express himself

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after such a manner, as becomes the Majesty of God; and so as that his Mind may attend to the Sense of all those Words, which he speaks either vocally or mentally. He must have time enough for his Thoughts to dwell a little upon each Particular, and to pass on gradually from one thing to another; that he may be all along conscious to himself what he is saying, and that the most ardent Affections of his Soul may accompany every thing which he saies.

This being the case, I dare appeal even to such as are the greatest Admirers of *extempore* Prayers. Can they think it possible for a Man to attend so closely and so constantly upon the Conceiver; and at the very same Instant with the closest and most constant Application of Soul, with the greatest Energy of its Powers, to speak the same Prayer to God? Let them but observe, with what Difficulty, and how very imperfectly, they are able to attend to what one Man speaks, when they themselves are speaking to another. They can't but be sensible, that in such a case the Mind is hurried and distracted between two such different Operations. The one hinders the other, and calls off the Mind from the other. They are able to afford but a very slight Attention to him, whose Words they listen to; and they cannot but lose much of what he speaks; and are frequently forc'd to pause in their own speaking. And could they then in such a case, make the Speech of him they listen to, their own? Could they speak it perfectly after him? Could they in an Instant repeat it? They can't but know, that this is impossible; and a very little Experience and Reflection will convince them of it.

And can they then imagin, that the Soul can be intensely and perpetually fix'd upon the Conceiver
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of a Prayer, and with the utmost and most uninterrupted Ardency, speak the same Prayer to God, at once? Each of these Operations does every Minute require the whole Soul, and all the Powers of it. And can the Soul then divide it self, and perform them both together? Can it be, with all possible Application, at the very same time, imploy'd about the very same Part of Prayer, in two such different Respects; *viz.* as it is spoken by another, and as it is spoken by its self? Men may as well pretend, that they can walk and sit still at once, or look upwards and downwards at once; as they may pretend, that they can closely and constantly attend what is conceiv'd *extempore*; and at the very same time, with all that Vigor and constant Application of Mind which Prayer requires, express and speak to God, what they heard from the Conceiver's Mouth.

Again, I have shewn, that 'tis impossible for the Soul to spend less time even in bare Attention to the Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, than the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation. And I shall now proceed to shew, that 'tis impossible to speak any Part of a Prayer to God in less time, than in the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation. For let any Man say the Lord's Prayer mentally, that is, let him direct his Soul to God, and speak inwardly or mentally to him the Lord's Prayer, without moving his Lips, or suffering his Voice to be heard: And let him do this after such a manner, that his Mind may attend to all the Words thereof, and his Thoughts may dwell a little upon each Particular, and pass on gradually from one thing to another, and that he may be all along conscious to himself what he is saying, and that the most ardent Affections of his Soul may accompany every Word he saies: I say, let any Man make this Experiment

in his Closet (as I hope, every good Christian will be very willing to do) and he'll soon be convinc'd, that the saying the Lord's Prayer after this manner will take up as much time, as the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation of it would do.

Now if such a mental speaking of a well known precompos'd set Form, will take up as much time, as a moderately deliberate Pronunciation thereof would do; I am sure, the like mental speaking of any part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, as soon as 'tis taken from the Conceiver's Mouth, will take up proportionably full as great a space of time. For it requires rather more time thus to speak what a Man cannot readily say by rote, than it does thus to speak what a Man can readily say by rote; as every body's Experience testifies. And consequently the mental speaking of every part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, after this devout manner, (which Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, a Man, by once hearing it, can't be suppos'd able to say perfectly by heart), must of necessity take up as much time at least, as the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation of the same part of Prayer would take up.

Now since both a close and constant Attention to the Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, and such a speaking of it, as is requisite in Prayer, do each of 'em require, not only a constant and vigorous Application of Soul to that particular Operation, but also as much time as amounts to a moderately deliberate Pronunciation of it; and since the Actions are in themselves so utterly inconsistent, that the Soul can't possibly perform 'em in the very same Instant; I dare appeal to any rational Person, whether it be possible for a Man closely and constantly to attend a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, and in the same Instant, and at the very same time, to speak it to God with

that fervency of Spirit, and that uninterrupted fixedness upon the Divine Majesty, which Prayer requires. Since each of these Actions imployes the whole Soul, and the whole Time; certainly they cannot be perform'd both together, but must of necessity be perform'd at different times, that is, the one after the other.

I confess, if the Person that officiates, should in the pouring forth a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, make such a long Pause at the End of every Clause or Sentence, that the Congregation might have as much time to speak to God in their own Persons what the Conceiver spake, as the Conceiver himself took in uttering the same; 'tis possible, that in such a Case, those who had good Memories might be able to join in every part of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, and to keep pace with the Conceiver thereof. But such a case as this, was never heard of; nor is any thing like it pretended to, that I know of, by those that officiate in separate Congregations. And therefore I shall take no farther notice of it. 'Tis sufficient, that I have shewn that according to the Practice of the Dissenters, whose Teachers make no such considerable Pauses, unless when they are at a great Loss; I say, according to the constant Practice of the Dissenters, 'tis impossible for the Congregation both to attend to the conceiv'd Prayer, and at the same time to speak every Part thereof personally to Almighty God. Because the Operations of the Soul in attending and speaking, are so utterly different, that they can't be perform'd at once. And each of 'em will of necessity take up as much time, as the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation; and therefore both of 'em can't be perform'd in the time, which the Conceiver spends in one continu'd

tinu'd course of speaking; and consequently they must be perform'd the one after the other.

And this, I am persuaded, every considering Person may easily be convinc'd of by his own Experience; if he will but give himself the Opportunity of making serious Reflections upon the Operations of his own Mind. Let him but observe (what he cannot but be conscious of) how his Soul works and acts in his private Devotions; and how it works and acts in the hearing a patherical Sermon. I am persuaded, that he will soon perceive, that it works and acts after a quite different manner in his private Devotions, than it either does or can in the hearing and attending to a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*; and that it works and acts in the hearing and attending to a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, exactly after the same manner, that it does in hearing a patherical Sermon.

For my own part, I'm sure, I've often enough observ'd this in hearing and attending to the Pulpit Prayers of some of the conforming Clergy, (of which I shall have occasion to treat hereafter,) the joining in which ('till a Man is accusom'd to 'em, and throughly acquainted with them) has the very same Difficulty, as the joining in Prayers *conceiv'd extempore*. And I have always found a most manifest Difference between the Operations of my Soul during my Attention to what the Minister utter'd, and the Operations of it in private Prayer, whether precompos'd or *conceiv'd extempore*; and that my Soul did constantly work and act in the hearing such a Prayer, exactly after the same manner, that it did when I heard a patherical Sermon. This demonstrates to me, that Attention to the Words of another, and speaking those Words to God, are Actions so utterly inconsistent, that

they can't be perform'd at once; and that whilst I was attending to Man, I did not speak to God; and consequently did not, and could not, pray at all. Nay, I can safely averr, that I was never once able to speak to God one Syllable of what I heard from the Minister, 'till after the Minister had done speaking that Part, and I for a time had forborn my Attention to the Minister, that I might repeat to God what I heard the Minister utter.

'Tis most evident therefore, that Attention to what is said by the Person that officiates, and the Repetition and speaking of what one learns by that Attention, to Almighty God, (each of which requires as much Space, as that of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation), I say, 'tis most evident, that these two different Operations of the Soul, cannot possibly be perform'd together, but must of necessity be perform'd the one after the other; and the Congregation must first hear a part of the Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, before they can speak it to God as their own; and the Conceiver must first have made an end of speaking each part of the Prayer, before the Congregation can begin to speak it as their own to Almighty God.

It may be said perhaps, that tho' a Person cannot at the same time both attend to the Person that officiates, and also speak the very same things to God, which he hears the Person that officiates speak: yet when he has diligently attended to what the Person that officiates has utter'd, and when he has weigh'd and approv'd the same; he can then in an Instant lift up his Soul to God, and fervently join in what was said, by saying an *Amen* to it, and by a short Ejaculation declare his Assent thereto, and hearty Concurrence therein, by saying, *Grant this, O Lord*, or the like. To this I answer, that tho'

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such a Practice is better than a bare Attention, without speaking personally to God at all; yet even this is not joining as we ought. For as I have already said, we must not only approve what the Person that officiates does utter, by saying now and then an *Amen* thereto, or by sending up a fervent Ejaculation; but personally speak the whole of it to God. We must continue speaking to God, as long as the Person that officiates, is speaking that Prayer in which we pretend to join; and we must speak the very same Words of Prayer (as near as we are able) which he speaks. We must spend our time, as he does; and begin, and go on, together with him. We must not barely, by the sudden dartings of our Souls, testify our Concurrence in his Prayer; but pray as fully, as largely, as expressly, and particularly as he does.

In short, in joint Prayer, the Congregation must pray, as if they and the Minister were but one Man; and consequently the Congregation must not spend its time only in Attention and Ejaculations, whilst the Minister prays; but both the Minister and the Congregation must jointly offer up one and the same form of Words; and consequently the Congregation must mentally repeat the whole Prayer which he offers; and do it with such Deliberation and Attention, that they may be sensible they are speaking that Prayer to God, and that their Souls may pass on gradually from one thing to another, and most fervent Affections may accompany whatsoever they thus mentally speak. And I am fully persuaded, that a little Reflection and Consideration will convince the most prejudic'd Person, that 'tis impossible for the Congregation to do thus, and at the same time attend and listen to what the Person that officiates pours forth.

Now from what has been said, it appears very plainly, that 'tis impossible for a Congregation to join in every part of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*. For they cannot speak to God any one part of the Prayer, whether more or less, 'till the Conceiver has done speaking it. And when he has done speaking it, and they begin to repeat it; they can't do it in less time than in the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation. And consequently they must lose as much of the Prayer, as they can possibly join in. They may speak to God, and consequently join in the first part; but then they must of necessity lose the second. They may speak to God, and consequently join in, the third part; but then they must of necessity lose the fourth. For Instance (in the Prayer already given) they may join in, *O most glorious Lord God*; but then they must lose, *who dwellest in the Heavens*. Because whilst the Conceiver is uttering, *who dwellest in the Heavens*, they are repeating and saying to God, *O most glorious Lord God*; and consequently cannot attend to the Conceiver, so as to learn these Words, *who dwellest in the Heavens*. Again, they may speak, and consequently join in, those Words, *And art infinite in Perfections*; but they must lose as much of what follows, as the Conceiver utters, whilst they are saying to God, *And art infinite in Perfections*. And so to the End of the suppos'd Prayer.

'Tis plain therefore, that they must lose at least half of the Prayer. Because they must spend much about the same time in repeating what they hear the Conceiver utter, as he does in uttering it; even tho' he utters it with a moderately deliberate Pronunciation. So that they must of necessity lose every other part of the Prayer, that is, about half

of the whole Prayer; and consequently 'tis impossible for them to join in every part thereof.

Let us now see, how the Congregation may join in such precompos'd set Forms, as they are accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with.

Secondly then, I say, that the Congregation may, without any Difficulty, join in every part of such a precompos'd set Form, as they are accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. I say, they may do it without any Difficulty, that is, without any Difficulty arising from the Nature of the thing. For doubtless the Devil will alwaies be hindring us in our Prayers, and endeavoring to create Difficulties in our performing that Duty as we ought, by his restless Temptations; whether we join in the use of Prayers *conceiv'd extempore*, or of such precompos'd set Forms as we are accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. But 'tis very plain, that there is no Difficulty arising from the Nature of the thing, which can hinder our joining in every part of such precompos'd set Forms.

For this is certain, that when a Congregation joins in the use of such precompos'd set Forms; they know them, as well as the Minister himself; and can begin 'em together with him, and keep pace all along with him even to the End thereof. They are not oblig'd to attend, 'till he has vocally utter'd any part of a Prayer, that they may learn it from his Mouth; but they may mentally speak to God, as soon as the Minister himself can begin to speak vocally to him. They have nothing to do, but to mind what they themselves do say. They are not forc'd, 1. to attend to the Minister as long as he is speaking; and then 2. to spend as much time in speaking to God what the Minister said, as the Minister spent in speaking it; and thereby 3. to
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lose as much of the Prayer, as they can possibly join in: but they may without any Delay mentally speak the very same Words to God, which the Minister speaks, as fast as the Minister himself can vocally speak them, nor need they lose one Syllable thereof. No part of the Congregation's time is wasted in listening to Man; but the whole of it is employ'd in actual and personal Prayer to God. And every Member of the Congregation has full time enough, to attend the Sense of all those Words, which he himself personally utters; and for his Thoughts to dwell a little upon each Particular, and to pass on gradually from one thing to another; so that he may be all along conscious to himself of what he is saying, and the most ardent Affections of his Soul may accompany every thing which he saies; I say, every Member of the Congregation has full time enough for all these Things; because he hath as much time as the Minister spends in a vocal Utterance of the Prayer, that is, as much as the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation; which is certainly sufficient for all these Purposes.

It may be said perhaps, But what shall the Congregation do, if the Minister hurries on faster than he ought; and does not himself spend as much time in his vocal Address to God, as a moderately deliberate Pronunciation amounts to? I answer, by asking another Question. What if the same Man should conceive a Prayer *extempore*, and should be guilty of the same Fault therein? You'll say, that he ought to do otherwise; and so say I too. But what is this to the Point in hand? There is no doubt, but that the very best way of performing joint Prayer may be abus'd. But the Question is, which Way of performing joint Prayer is best, when duly us'd. The joint use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* does
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most certainly, as hath been shewn, make it impossible for the Congregation to join in every part of the Prayer which the Minister offers up, even tho' his Pronunciation be moderately deliberate: but if the Pronunciation of the Minister be moderately deliberate in the use of such a precompos'd set Form, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; 'tis plain, that the Congregation may without any Difficulty join in every part thereof.

But it may be said, that in the use of a Prayer-Book a Man spends as much time in reading, as he would do in attending to what a Minister utters *extempore*. It may be so indeed; if one be not accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, the Forms contain'd in that Prayer-Book. But this Objection is quite besides the Question. For I all along suppose, that the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with those precompos'd set Forms, in which they join. And if so; 'tis plain, that they cannot waste any time in reading them; but may jointly use them as readily and easily, as the Congregations of the Establish'd Church do jointly repeat the Lord's Prayer or the Creed.

Nay, if they should at any time by chance miss a Word; the Book that is before 'em, does immediately relieve 'em; and certainly the looking for a Word (which they that are acquainted with their Prayer-Books, will find in an Instant) takes up nothing near the time, which a constant Attendance upon the Minister for every Word he speaks *extempore*, must of necessity do.

Thus then have I shewn, 1. That 'tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*. 2. That the Congregation may, without any Difficulty, join in every part of such

a precompos'd set Form, as they are accustom'd to, and throughly acquainted with.

C H A P. V.

That the Novelty of Prayers conceiv'd extempore very much hinders, whereas the repeated use of the same Forms does most effectually secure, the Attention of the Congregation in Prayer.

BUT 'tis pretended, that the Novelty of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore* keeps the Minds of the Congregation awake, and quickens their Attention; whereas the repeated use of the same precompos'd set Form of Prayer creates a Dulness in their Minds, and causes 'em to wander, and consequently prevents their joining in every part thereof.

Now before I answer this Argument, 'tis necessary for me to observe, that there is a twofold Attention, *viz.* 1. an Attention to that which is spoken by another Person, 2. an Attention to that which one speaks ones self. The first sort of Attention is exercis'd, when one hears another Man pray, discourse, or the like. The second is exercis'd, when the Man himself does either pray to God, or discourse to Man. For whether one speaks to God or Man, 'tis necessary that he should mind what he saies, and be conscious thereof. For if a Man does not attend to what he speaks, his Soul can't be imploy'd about it; and consequently he that does not attend to what he saies, does not speak (whether to God or Man) as a rational Creature: Because his rational Powers do not go along with his Discourse; they

they neither dictate nor animate what he saies; his Words do not expresse and signify what he then actually intends and means; but he either talks *merely* by rote, or babbles thoughtless Non-sense; either of which is unworthy of a Man, and below the Dignity of his Nature. 'Tis impossible therefore for a Man to speak as he ought (whether to God or Man) without the second sort of Attention; that is, without attending to what he himself doth speak. And consequently the second sort of Attention is absolutely necessary in Prayer.

This being premis'd, I shall proceed to answer the Objection. It must indeed be granted, that the Novelty of Prayers *conceiv'd extempore* does really keep the Minds of the Hearers awake, and quicken their Attention to those Prayers; and consequently, that the Novelty of Prayers *conceiv'd extempore* does most effectually raise and continue the first sort of Attention, *viz.* the Attention to what another Man saies. It must also be granted, that the repeated Use of the same precompos'd set Forms of Prayer does as certainly create a Dulness in the Minds of the Hearers, and as certainly cause them to wander; as the repeated use of the same Sermons would do. These things, I say, must needs be confess'd and acknowledg'd, with respect to the first sort of Attention. But then our Adversaries, I hope, will remember, that in Prayer we are to exercise, not the first, but the second sort of Attention. We are to attend, not to what another saies, but to what we our selves do say. And therefore,

1. Tho' the Novelty of Prayers *conceiv'd extempore* does indeed keep the Minds of the Congregation awake, and quicken their Attention to those Prayers; yet it does not in the least promote that Attention
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which ought to be exercis'd in Prayer. For it only promotes their Attention to what the Minister saies; but not their Attention to what they themselves do say. Nay, the Novelty of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*, as it promotes the wrong, so it necessarily hinders the right, sort of Attention. For this Novelty does so much imploy the Minds of the Congregation, that it takes off that Attention to themselves, which they ought to exercise. For the more they attend to another, the less they must of necessity attend to what they say themselves. And consequently the Novelty of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*, greatly hinders Attention in Prayer, that is, that sort of Attention which is proper to be exercis'd in Prayer; during the Performance of which Duty (whether separately or jointly) a Man's Soul ought to be recollected within it self, and as little disturb'd as may be with any thing external, that it may more fixedly attend to its own Discourse to God, and think upon nothing else.

2. The repeated Use of the same precompos'd set Form of Prayer, does not create a Dulness in the Minds of the Congregation, or cause 'em to wander; that is, with respect to the second sort of Attention, *viz.* the Attention to what a Person speaks himself. I confess, as has been already said, that if the Attention which ought to be exercis'd in Prayer, were only an Attention to what another Person speaks; then the repeated Use of the same precompos'd set Form of Prayer would create a Dulness, and cause the Minds of the Congregation to wander. But since our Attention in Prayer is of a quite different Nature; since 'tis an Attention to our selves, and not to another Person; therefore the repeated Use of the same Prayer does not create a Dulness, or cause the Minds of the Congregation to wander.

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For a Man's Attention to what he himself does speak in Prayer, springs from an internal Cause; it arises, and is kept up by something within himself, *viz.* a deep and thorow Sense of the vast Weight and Importance of those Matters concerning which he speaks, and of the infinite Greatness and Glory of the Divine Majesty, which he approaches in Prayer. And a deep and thorow Sense of these Particulars is created and increas'd by the Operation of God's Holy Spirit, by frequent Prayer, Meditation, and other spiritual Exercises. And the want of that Attention to what a Man speaks to God in Prayer, which arises from such a Sense of the Object and Matter of Prayer, cannot be cur'd by the Novelty of that Prayer in which a Man joins. For that does only alter, and not remove, the Disease. It turns the want of Attention to our selves, into a close Attention to another; which Attention to another, does indeed most effectually take off our Minds from the true Attention requisite in Prayer, but will never bring us to it. The want therefore of the true Attention in Prayer, *viz.* of an Attention to what we our selves do speak to God, can't be cur'd, but is much increas'd, by the Novelty of Prayers *conceiv'd extempore.* Nor is it possible for us to attain a due Attention in Prayer, otherwise than by the Operation of God's Holy Spirit, by frequent Prayer, Meditation, and other Spiritual Exercises; which will certainly produce in us such a deep and thorow Sense of the Greatness and Glory of God, and the Weight and Importance of what we speak in Prayer, as will in due time certainly cause a due Attention in Prayer.

3. The repeated Use of the same precompos'd set Form of Prayer, does not prevent the Congregation's joining in every Part thereof. I confess, no
Man

Man can join in a Prayer, if he does not attend to it; and that he cannot join any longer than he attends: But then I add, that he may attend to every Part of such a precompos'd set Form, as is frequently us'd by him; and consequently may join in every Part of the same. I confess, if attending to a Prayer as said by another, were joining in it; then this Pretence would be plausible. For, as I have said, the repeated Use of the same Form, deadens the Attention to that Form as spoken by another. And in such a case the Mind would probably wander; and whilst it did not attend, would not join in the Prayer; but lose so many Portions of it, as were utter'd whilst it did not attend. But since the Attention to be us'd in Prayer, is not an Attention to what another saies, but an Attention to what one saies ones self; and since that Attention in the Congregation is not cherish'd, but really hinder'd, by the Novelty of *extempore* Prayers; and since this Attention owes its beginning and continuance to such internal Causes, as can operate during the repeated Use of the same precompos'd set Forms: therefore a Man may exercise the true Attention in Prayer, even whilst he joins in the repeated Use of the same precompos'd set Form; and he may join in every Part thereof; nay, he may attend and join much better in the repeated Use of such a Form, than 'tis possible for him to do in a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*; the Novelty of which takes him off from the true, and imployes him in the false, Attention; and makes it impossible for him to join in every Part thereof, as has been already shewn.

If it be objected, that I have (f) elsewhere suppos'd it possible for Mens Thoughts to wander, and for

(f) *Brief History*, Ch. 9. p. 113.

for their Voices to speak what their Hearts do not think on, in the joint Use of precompos'd set Forms; which I have asserted to be impossible in the joint Use of Prayers *conceiv'd extempore*; and consequently that I have allow'd, that there is a Conveniency as to Attention, arising from the joint Use of Prayers *conceiv'd extempore*, which Conveniency cannot be had in the joint Use of precompos'd set Forms; I answer, that 'tis indeed possible for Mens Thoughts to wander, and for their Voices to speak what their Hearts do not think on, in the joint Use of precompos'd set Forms. For Men may join with their Mouths by rote, when their Souls do not attend to what they say. And it must be own'd, that 'tis impossible for those who join in a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*, to speak that to God, which they do not at that time actually think on. For what is just caught from the Conceiver's Mouth, can't be repeated by rote. But then I deny, that these Concessions do prove the Conveniency of *extempore* Prayers, or the Inconveniency of precompos'd set Forms.

For, tho' 'tis possible for a Man to be guilty of a particular Fault in the Use of precompos'd set Forms, which he can't be guilty of whilst he joins in *extempore* Prayers; yet it must be remember'd, that that particular Fault is not necessarily to be committed, but may very well be avoided; and therefore if it be committed at all, 'tis not to be charg'd on the manner of praying, but upon the Person that uses it. But then on the other hand, I have already shewn, that 'tis impossible for a Man to join in every Part of a Prayer *conceiv'd extempore*; nay, that he can't join in above one half of it; and I shall soon prove, that he can't join in so much: And consequently joining in precompos'd set Forms is
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much preferable to joining in *extempore* Prayers. Because the Evil attending the one is easily prevented; but the Evil attending the other, is not only infinitely greater, but utterly unavoidable also. Nay, that Man must be the most careless Wretch in the World, whose Mind wanders from one Quarter so much of a well known precompos'd set Form; as the same Man must infallibly lose, and cannot possibly join in, of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*.

But it may be said, that even in the repeated joint Use of precompos'd set Forms, 'tis absolutely necessary for the Congregation to attend in some measure to the Person that officiates; and this necessary Attention to him, according to my way of arguing, hinders the Congregation's attending to what they themselves do say to God in Prayer. To this I answer, that 'tis impossible for any Congregation to join together in a common Form, which is indited by each Person in it. For if each Person did indite the Prayer; there would be as many Prayers, as there are Persons in the Congregation. 'Tis necessary therefore that there should be some one Form of Prayer offer'd (whether precompos'd or conceiv'd *extempore*) in which all the Congregation are to join. Now such is the Infirmary of Human Nature, that many Men cannot begin, and go on with, one common Form of Prayer, even tho' it be precompos'd, without some small degree of Attention to the Person that officiates. Wherefore (tho' it might be a more perfect Oblation, if it were possible for us to do otherwise; yet) since some degree of Attention to the Person that officiates is unavoidable; that way of praying is in this respect most certainly preferable, in which the smallest Measure of such an Attention is requir'd.

Now

Now such is the way of praying by the repeated Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. For in that case, the Congregation attends to the Minister, as little as 'tis possible, and as little as our Human Nature will permit. Tho' they do attend something, yet 'tis next unto nothing: they attend, not to learn their Prayer, but only to observe a tolerable Harmony in the Use of the several Parts of it; and surely there is a great deal of difference between such a measure of Attention to the Minister, and an Attention to him for every Word he speaks. There's a great difference between attending to one Word in a hundred, so as to observe a mutual Proportion in speaking together, whether vocally or mentally; and attending to every Syllable: between such an Attention to another, as is consistent with attending to our selves; and such an one as utterly destroys it.

Let me illustrate this Matter with a familiar Comparison. Suppose a Number of skilful Musicians were met together with a Design to join in some Performance. There must, as every body knows, be some Person appointed to keep Time, even tho' every Man of 'em should be an absolute Master both of his Instrument and his Lesson. They must all of 'em therefore observe the Person that keeps the Time; which Observance is exactly answerable to that Attention to the Minister for the Regulation of joint Worship, which a Congregation must yield, when it joins in the Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as they are accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. In this case, every body knows, with how much ease they will perform their several Parts; and that, tho' they must be observant of one Person, yet every Man's Lesson

proceeds readily from himself; and that his Observance of that Person does not hinder him so much as to make him in the least forget any one of his own Notes. But if these Musicians, tho' never so skillful, were oblig'd to perform in Confort a Lesson of any particular Master's composing, which they were not acquainted with before-hand; they must then, not only observe that particular Master's Time, but also, in that Instant learn every Note, and strike and sound them as near as they can in Conjunction with him from whom they learn'd them, and endeavor to perform their Parts as fast as they can hear, that they may keep Pace with the particular Master, who directs and indites their Music. And in this case, I need not tell you, what sort of Harmony there would be.

And accordingly, any Person that will make the Experiment, cannot but observe, that when he is (as 'tis now suppos'd) accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, that precompos'd set Form which he is to join in; and knows the course and manner of the Oblation of the several Parts of it, and the Measure of the Minister's Pronunciation; he feels no manner of Disturbance in such a degree of Attention to the Minister, as is sufficient to regulate the time to be spent in Prayer; but can personally begin, proceed, and conclude with the Minister, without the least difficulty. Whereas on the other hand, when the Prayer is perfectly new, a Man must of necessity attend to the Minister all the while the Minister is speaking; and has no share of time to spend in Attention to himself, and to what he personally speaks to God; except what he takes off from his Attention to the Minister, and in which he must for that Reason lose a proportionable Quantity of

of the Minister's Prayer. And is not this a wretched Discord in Prayer?

How manifest therefore is the Advantage to the whole Congregation, in the repeated Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as they are accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; above what is possible for them to enjoy in the Use of *extempore* Prayers! In the one case their Attention to another does not create them any perceptible Hindrance in the whole course of the Prayers: in the other, it either consumes their whole time, and consequently totally destroys the true Attention requisite in Prayer; or else it wasts at least half of their time, and makes it impossible for them to join in the other half of the Prayer, to which they could not possibly attend.

CHAP. VI.

That the Affections of the Congregation cannot possibly accompany a Prayer conceiv'd extempore, so well as they may accompany such a precompos'd set Form, as they are accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with.

SECONDLY, I have (g) elsewhere observ'd, 1. That Whether a Man conceives a Prayer *extempore*, or prays in a set Form of Words, either precompos'd, or not; 'tis certain that his Prayer cannot

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(g) *Brief Hist.* ch. 1. p. 11, 12, 13.

' be acceptable, unless it be accompany'd with such
 ' pious Affections, as are futable to the Matter of
 ' it; that is, for instance, unless in Confession the
 ' Heart be full of Humility, Sorrow, Shame, &c.
 ' and in Petition, Intercession, and Thanksgiving,
 ' it be inflam'd with those Holy Passions which
 ' those several parts of Prayer require. 2. That
 ' those devout Affections, those holy Passions,
 ' without which no Prayer can be acceptable to
 ' God, and which may be felt in, and go along
 ' with, both the Use of a set Form of Prayer,
 ' and also the Conception of a Prayer *extempore*;
 ' are rais'd by the Operation of God's Holy Spirit
 ' upon the Inner-Man, whether the Person in whom
 ' they are rais'd, do use a set Form of Prayer, or
 ' conceive a Prayer *extempore*. So that the Opera-
 ' tion of God's Holy Spirit in Prayer is by no
 ' means deny'd either by our Adversaries or our
 ' selves; but the absolute necessity thereof is gran-
 ' ted, nay, zealously contended for, by both Par-
 ' ties.

Now I shall shew, that the Affections of the
 Congregation cannot possibly accompany a Prayer
 conceiv'd *extempore*, so well as they may accom-
 pany such a precompos'd set Form, as they are ac-
 custom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. For
 'tis acknowledg'd on all Hands, that the Affections
 of the Congregation do then accompany a Prayer
 after the best manner, when they are, 1. most
 futable to the Matter of it, 2. most constant, 3.
 most vigorous and inflam'd. Now the Affections
 of the Congregation cannot possibly be so futable,
 so constant, and so vigorous or inflam'd, in accom-
 panying a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, as they may
 be in accompanying such a precompos'd set Form,

as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with.

1. I say, they cannot be so sutable to the Matter of the Prayer. For the Affections of the Congregation are by so much the more sutable to the Matter of the Prayer, by how much the better and more thoroughly the Congregation understands it. Now a Man may certainly much better understand the Sense and Meaning of every Part, Expression, and Syllable, of what he is accustom'd to and thoroughly acquainted with, and consequently has time and leisure to examin with the greatest care; than of that which he never hears but once, and which he has no considerable time to examin and reflect upon. But of this more hereafter in the eighth Chapter, where I shall make it appear, that a Congregation can much better understand such a precompos'd set Form as they are accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; than a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*. And consequently the Affections of the Congregation will be more sutable to the Matter of the Prayer, if it be such a precompos'd set Form, as they are accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; than they can be, if it is conceiv'd *extempore*.

2. The Affections of the Congregation can't be so constant in accompanying a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, as they may in accompanying such a precompos'd set Form, as they are accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. For the Affections of the Congregation are then truly constant, when they accompany every Part of the Prayer. And this they can't do, unless the Congregation do actually join in every Part thereof. For tho' a Man may be full of Sorrow, Humility, Shame, &c. when he hears such a Sermon as excites those Affections in his Soul; yet he can't express his Sorrow, Shame,

Humility, &c. to Almighty God; unless he actually prays to God. Now when we say, that the Affections must accompany a Prayer, we mean, that the respective Affections must be not barely felt in the Soul, but felt and express'd also; not only rais'd and exercis'd (for that they may be in hearing a Sermon, or in the bare hearing of a Prayer) but also declar'd and exerted, and reported to the Divine Majesty. They must accompany not what we hear another speak, but what we our selves do speak (either vocally or mentally) to Almighty God. And the Affections of the Congregation cannot possibly thus accompany the Prayer, unless they themselves do pray that Prayer by joining therein, and making it their own by a personal Oblation of it.

Now I have already prov'd, that 'tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every Part of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*. And consequently their Affections can't be constant in accompanying a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*. Because they cannot accompany those Parts of the Prayer, which the Congregation does not and cannot join in. But then I have prov'd, that the Congregation may without any difficulty join in every Part of such a precompos'd set Form as they are accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. And consequently the Affections of the Congregation may be constant in accompanying such a precompos'd set Form. Because they may accompany every Part thereof, and be exerted and express'd during the Oblation of the whole Prayer, from the beginning to the end.

3. The Affections of the Congregation can't be so vigorous and inflam'd in accompanying a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*; as they may be in accompanying such a precompos'd set Form, as they are accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. For
this

this is a notorious Truth, that the Soul does then operate with the greatest force and briskness, when its Operations are not interrupted by some thing of a different Nature. For the Soul acquires Strength by Action; and its Vigor increases by continuance in Action; till the whole force of it is spent. This we feel by Experience in many particular Instances; but in nothing more plainly than in Prayer. For therein we cannot but observe, that we grow more fervent by degrees, and are not near so warm and affectionate at the beginning, as in the Progress of that Duty. But every Interruption deadens our Zeal, and quenches our spiritual Fire. Wherefore the Affections of the Soul in Prayer cannot but be by so much the more vigorous and inflam'd, by how much the more constant and uninterrupted they are.

Now I have shewn, that 'tis possible for the Congregation to join in every Part of such a precomposed set Form, as they are accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; and therefore their Affections may be constant in accompanying such a Form; nor need they meet with any Interruption, by being call'd off in the midst of their Intenseness to an Operation of a quite different Nature. The Congregation have nothing to do or mind, besides exerting their Souls one particular way; and the more they continue in this, with the greater Energy they do it. But then on the other hand, I have shewn, that 'tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every Part of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*; and therefore their Affections cannot possibly be constant in accompanying it. Because their Souls must alternately attend to Man and speak to God, which are Operations of a quite different kind, and such as do naturally and unavoidably interfere with, and hinder each other. So that the Congregation are frequently

quently interrupted in the exercise of their Affections in Prayer. And this Interruption damps the fervor of their Devotion, and will not suffer it to rise to its due height by an undisturb'd continuance therein.

Nay, tho' it were granted (in spite of that evident Demonstration which I have produc'd to the contrary) that it is possible for the Congregation to join in every Part of a Prayer conceived *extempore*; yet 'tis notorious, that their Souls can't be wholly imploy'd in speaking to God. For they must of necessity attend to Man, or else they do not know one Syllable of that which they must speak to God. Now I appeal to any considerate Person, whether the Souls of the Congregation (even at the same time, that they are necessarily imploy'd in a close Attention to the Minister) can express themselves with the same vigor of Affection to Almighty God; as if they had nothing at all to mind but speaking to him only. Can they act with as much vigor, when imploy'd two different ways at once; as if they were imploy'd but one way, and were busied in one Operation only? Certainly he that employs his whole Soul and all its Powers in speaking to God, must pray with much more vigorous and inflam'd Affections; than 'tis possible for him to do, whose Soul is divided between two quite different Operations, and is forc'd, with an everlasting hurry, to listen and pray, and pray and listen, and perform two quite contrary things in the very same space of time, which the other spends upon one only.

But tis pretended, that the Novelty of *extempore* Prayers is apt to warm, whereas the repeated use of the same Forms is apt to deaden, the Affections of the Congregation. Before I answer this Objection, tis necessary for me to observe, that there is a vast deal of difference between being warm'd by

a Prayer, and being warm'd *in* a Prayer. He that does only hear another Man pray, may be warm'd *by* that Prayer; altho' he himself does not pray at all. For instance, a Man may come into a Congregation, and hear another praying to God in a very fervent manner. This may work vehemently upon his Passions, and enkindle suitable Affections in his Breast. But this may be done, altho' the Person that comes thus occasionally in, does not speak one Word of that Prayer to God, either vocally or mentally. The Prayer works upon him exactly after the same manner, as a pathetical Sermon does. And as a Man may be mov'd and warm'd by a Sermon, altho' he does not Preach it himself; so he may be mov'd and warm'd by a Prayer, altho' he does not pray it himself; that is, altho' he himself does not personally offer up (either vocally or mentally) that Prayer to God. For Affections may be rais'd altho' they be not express'd to God by a personal Address to him; and a Fire may be kindled within us, and warm our Souls, altho' we do not address our selves at that time to the Divine Majesty, and spend the heat of that Fire in such an Address. We may actually think of all those things that are mention'd in the Prayer; we may have and feel within our selves the very same Sorrow, Humility, Shame, Desires, Gratitude, &c. which the Man, whom we hear praying, discourses of and expresses to God; altho' we do not mention those Particulars our selves, and altho' we our selves do not personally express them, and discourse of 'em. For the very Essence of Prayer consists (as I have already shewn) not in having and feeling such and such Passions, and the like; but in expressing them personally to God, in declaring to him by a personal Address (whether vocal or mental) that we are
thus

thus and thus affected. Thus then you perceive, that a Man may be mov'd *by* a Prayer, altho' he himself at the same time does not pray at all.

But then, whosoever is mov'd *in* a Prayer, must of necessity pray, when he is so mov'd. For he can't be mov'd *in* Prayer, unless he be praying when he is mov'd. At the same time that he speaks to God (whether vocally or mentally,) his Affections are rais'd, his Soul is warm'd, his Heart is full of Holy Passions: And this spiritual Heat diffuses it self thro' the whole Man, and enlivens and invigorates every Faculty. So that he does not speak to God after a listless manner; but the Mind is every way imploy'd, all its Powers are upon the stretch, and exert themselves with all possible Zeal, and with a glorious Emulation strive to excell each other, and even to exceed themselves, in the Service of their Maker.

This Observation being premis'd, I proceed to answer the Objection which occasion'd it. If the bare Warmth of the Affections were the only thing to be regarded, this Pretence would be plausible. For if the Business of the Congregation in Prayer were only to hear the Minister pray, and to be mov'd *by* that Prayer which he offers; then indeed there would be a great Conveniency in Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*. Because 'tis certain, that they do more powerfully raise the Affections, than such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. But then it must be remember'd, that the Business of the Congregation in Prayer, is not to hear the Minister pray, but to pray themselves together with the Minister; 'tis not to be mov'd *by* the Minister's Prayer, but to be mov'd *in* their own Prayer together with the Minister: 'tis not to have their Affections warm'd or rais'd *by* the Minister's Prayer; but to express

express and declare their own Affections as already actually warm'd and rais'd, in their own personal Address to God. The Warmth in Prayer is not to be receiv'd from without, but to issue forth from within. The Soul is not to be externally wrought upon, but vigorously to exert it self. It must not be Passive, but wholly Active, in the Discharge of that great Duty.

This being the case, the Objection of our Adversaries recoils upon themselves. For the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with, is so far from deadning their Affections, that it secures the due Exercise of them. For the Congregation has nothing to interrupt their Attention, or to clog or divert the Operations of their Souls; and consequently they may exert themselves to their utmost, without feeling any hindrance. The warmth of their Breasts may freely discharge it self, and accompany their joint Devotions. Their several Affections may not only be felt, but fervently express'd. Their Minds have not any different Operations to perform at the same time; and consequently they may be wholly imploy'd about this one thing. All their Faculties may act in Concert, and with a perfect Harmony. And in this case their Prayers cannot but be accompany'd, with the most suitable, constant, and vigorous Affections.

Whereas on the other hand, Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* do indeed warm the Affections of the Congregation, but at the same time they hinder the due Exercise of them. For the Congregation is so much imployed in listning to Man, that they han't time or opportunity (as I have already shewn) to join in every Part of the Prayer. And consequently tho' they may be mov'd by it, yet they are
not

not mov'd *in* it, as they ought to be. For they can't be mov'd *in* those Parts of the Prayer, which tho' they hear them, yet 'tis impossible for them to join in. And consequently, tho' *extempore* Prayers may warm the Affections; yet 'tis impossible for the Congregation to discharge that Warmth after such a manner as is requisite in Prayer, *viz.* by an affectionate Oblation of every Part of the Prayer. And consequently *extempore* Prayers do really hinder and deaden that Exercise of the Affections, which ought to accompany Prayer.

Nay farther, tho' it were possible for the Congregation to join in every Part of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*; yet their Affections could not be so warm in the Oblation of it, as otherwise they might be; For 'twill take up at least as much time as amounts to the Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation, for a Man to exert his Affections with any tolerable degree of Vigor and Fervency. Nay, one can't but often find, that when our Breasts are duly warm'd, we are desirous of a longer Space. We are willing to dwell a little more than ordinary upon each Particular; that the Flame which we feel within (and which, if 'tis pent up, is troublesome to us, and will soon be stifled) may spend it self. Now when the Soul has nothing to do in this whole Space of a moderately deliberate Pronunciation (which is ordinarily the whole time, that either is, or can be, spent in joint Prayer) but to attend what it speaks to God, and to discharge its own Fervor with every Word it speaks; certainly 'twill act much more powerfully, and exert an infinitely greater Force of Affections; than when 'tis, at least for some Part of the time, diverted by listening to the Minister, when its Faculties are thereby employ'd, and its Affections spent after a quite different

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rent manner. So that the raising of the Affections at the same time that they ought to be express'd, hinders and weakens the fervor of ones Mind in expressing 'em; it damps by an unseasonable (and consequently faulty) Diversion, that vigor of Spirit, which ought to enliven our Prayers; and waits at least a considerable Part of that time in Attention to Man, which cannot be more than *barely sufficient* for our personal Address to God, and for the Exercise of our most ardent Affections therein.

But I need not enlarge. If the difference between being mov'd by a Prayer, and being mov'd in a Prayer, be duly observ'd; nothing is more plain, than that the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, is so far from deadening, that it really secures the due Exercise of, the Affections in Prayer; and that Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*, tho' the Affections are warm'd by them, do not withstanding hinder that Exercise of the Affections in Prayer, which is absolutely requisite, whenever we perform that Duty.

But still there remains one Difficulty to be accounted for. 'Tis generally granted, that Music by raising the Affections is a great help to Devotion. Now if all that warmth of the Affections, which ought to accompany our Prayers, must proceed from within; how can our Affections be heighten'd by Music? To this I answer, that Music must be consider'd two waies, *viz.* either as accompanying that which is address'd to God, or as accompanying that which is not address'd to God.

Now when Music accompanies that which is not address'd to God, but only spoken in the Congregation, as in many Psalms of Praise, which are not directed to God, as the Matter of 'em plainly shews;
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in this case I say, that the Music does indeed in one sense raise Devotion, viz. as it puts us for the present in a devout Posture, and gives us such a sweet and rapturous Frame of Spirit, as fits us for religious Exercises, and creates in us such heavenly Dispositions, and such a warmth of Affections, as inclines and enables us to pray with the greater Fervency. But all this while the Effects of Music are receiv'd, and not express'd. The Affections are thereby rais'd from without, but do not issue from within. Nor indeed do we in this case express any thing from within; but a celestial Fire is enkindled in our Breasts by the Power of Harmony, which afterwards we may (if we please) exert in Addresses to God.

But then, when Music accompanies that which is address'd to God, the case is very different. For the Person that joins in what is address'd to God with Music accompanying it, and speaks to God those Words which are set to Music; either does so far understand the Music as to be able in a tolerable measure to join in the Harmony, as well as in the Words; or he does not so far understand it. If he does not so far understand it, as to be able in a tolerable measure to join in the Harmony as well as in the Words; then the Music hinders his Devotion; that is, it hinders such a Devotion as ought to be exercis'd in Prayer. It does not hinder the raising of devout Affections; but it hinders the expressing them to God. It calls off the Person from that Devotion which alone is proper in Prayer, to a Devotion quite of another kind. It turns the Expression of his Affections into a Reception of Affections; and makes him not pray to God, but listen to Man; not speak to God those Words which the Music accompanies, but only feast his Ears with the Pleasure of that Music to which the Words are set.

But

But on the other hand, if the Person does so far understand the Music as to be able in a tolerable measure to join in the Harmony as well as in the Words; then Music does certainly raise his Devotion; that is, it enables him to pray with the greater Elevation of Soul, and to utter the Words of Prayer with the greater Force of Spirit. This we feel by Experience; and I need not prove the Truth of it. But then it must be observ'd, that in this case the Harmony proceeds from a Man's self. He is assisted in his Prayers, not by listening to others, but by his own Music. The Music as well as the Prayer issues from within; and in the whole Exercise he is not passive, but active. Whensoever therefore we discourse of Music's raising Devotion, these Distinctions must be carefully made; and then all the Difficulty relating thereto will immediately vanish.

I shall now beg leave of the Reader to relate a certain Story concerning my self, which perhaps would hardly be credited, if any one but my self did report it of me, and which 'tis necessary notwithstanding for the Reader to be acquainted with; because otherwise he will not rightly understand some Passages which will follow.

Which is this. When I had satisfied my self as fully as I was able by Reading and Meditating; I was willing to try, whether the Practice of joint *extempore* Prayers answer'd my Theory of them. I had receiv'd a Variety of Accounts from the most credible Hands, which did abundantly confirm the Judgment I had already form'd. But I was willing to add my own Experience. In order to this, I was for a great while deliberating, whether I should go to the *Wednesday* Lecture, which is held alternately at two different Houses by the Dissenting

Teachers in our Town, and is frequently supply'd by their Brethren in our Neighbourhood. 'Twas a very considerable time before I could prevail with my self to make the Experiment. I understood my self better, than to cause any Disturbance: but the danger of Scandal might possibly be objected. But then my Person and Principles are so well known in our Town, that there could not be the least Suspicion of any Person's being mistaken about my Design in going to the Meetings. They would rather conclude, that I came as a Spy; and (because they very well knew, what Subject I was writing upon) that I intended to expose their Way and their Teachers. That Difficulty therefore relating to the Danger of Scandal, was at length remov'd; and I ventur'd into their Meetings; which for ten different times I constantly attended; and in that Space I heard six different Men (several of which, without any Compliment, I take to be Persons of as considerable and valuable Abilities, as most of the Party), and twenty different Prayers.

I need not give a particular Account of my Reception. I soon perceiv'd, that there was no danger of Scandal. However, to prevent the bare possibility of it, I dispers'd some hundreds of printed Papers, which (if it had not been otherwise known) abundantly declar'd the Reason of my appearing there. Nay, if any one Member of the Congregations had lain under a Mistake, and I had not spread those Papers to rectify it; yet the personal Rubs from the Pulpit, which some of their Teachers bestow'd on me, and which their Auditors could not but receive with a remarkable Satisfaction, would soon have inform'd the most ignorant Person amongst 'em, for what End I came thither.

I intended, when I went first, to have continu'd going for a considerable time, perhaps six or nine Months. But tho' their Sermons did not affright me, yet I must seriously profess, their Prayers did. I had more Reasons than one, to think that they were upon their Guard; and yet in the little time I went, I receiv'd abundant Conviction, that there is scarce any thing more prejudicial to true Religion, than the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*. The Impressions I receiv'd by seeing and hearing the Practice, were much stronger than those which were made by studying the Theory. And I must own, that I was so heartily griev'd at the Folly of their Way, that I could no longer bear being present at it. But I could heartily wish (and had I leisure, I would do it my self) that a parcell of their *extempore* Prayers, pour'd forth by their most eminently gifted Brethren, were taken in Writing, and publish'd. For certainly nothing could more effectually expose the Mischiefs of that absurd and abominable (for such I must take leave to think and call it), I say, that absurd and abominable Corruption, or rather Destruction, of the great Duty of joint Worship.

I shall not at present give an Account of all the Observations I made, whilst I attended the Dissenting Meetings; tho' some of them shall be mention'd in the following Chapters. However, I think my self oblig'd to own, that my *Spirit was stirr'd in me* (to use St. Luke's Expression concerning St. Paul, *Acts 17. 16.*) whilst I beheld the great difference between their devotions, and those of the establish'd Church. For whereas nothing is more evident, than that the Devouter Members of the establish'd Church do not spend their time in listening to the Common-Prayer, but keep Pace with their

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Ministers, and jointly offer up the same Prayers to God, which the Ministers vocally utter; it appear'd most evidently to me, that the devouter sort of Dissenters did quite otherwise. They plainly listen'd to their Prayers, just as they did to their Sermons; and were plainly mov'd and affected by both exactly after the same manner; as I could not but clearly perceive by their Gestures and whole Behavior. And therefore (had I no other Reason for what I assert) I could not but conclude from my own Experience of their Ways, 1. That the Dissenters do, during the time of Prayer, attend to their Ministers, and not to themselves; and think an Attention to the Minister the true Attention which ought to be exercis'd in Prayer. 2. That their Affections are mov'd (generally speaking) not *in*, but *by*, the Prayers of their Ministers, and that they imagine such a Warmth to be true Devotion. 3. That tho' they do sometimes lift up their Hearts in an Ejaculation (and by so doing lose even the hearing of as much of the Prayer, as the Minister utters the mean while), yet generally speaking, even those whom I have good Reason to think very well dispos'd Persons, and the most pious part of the Congregations, do not properly pray at all, but only *hear* the Minister pray. And how dangerous and fatal such Mistakes must be, and yet how good grounds there are to conclude that the Dissenters do universally labor under them; I am content, that any Person who has duly consider'd this and the foregoing Chapters, and particularly, 1. the two sorts of Attention, *viz.* the Attention to another, and the Attention to one's self; 2. the vast difference between being mov'd *by* a Prayer, and being mov'd *in* it; should determin.

C H A P. VII.

That diverse Imperfections with respect to the Matter of Prayer, cannot but attend joint extempore Prayers; which Imperfections may easily be avoided in the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with.

THirdly, diverse Imperfections, with respect both to the Matter and to the Expressions of Prayer, cannot but attend joint *extempore* Prayers; which may easily be avoided in the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. *First* with respect to the Matter of Prayer. For,

1. 'Tis granted on all Hands, that the Matter of joint Prayers ought to be complete; that is, the several Parts thereof ought to be sufficiently express'd, without the Omission of any thing material. I do not say, that whatsoever 'tis possible for us to mention in Prayer, ought alwaies particularly to be inserted; but I assert, that our joint Prayers, especially upon publick Occasions (for Instance, our Lord's Day Services, &c. in the public Assemblies) ought to be full and comprehensive, and with a convenient Brevity to express the whole Matter of Prayer.

Now there is such a Variety of Particulars in the Matter of Prayer, which ought to be consider'd and brought within the compass of our joint Devotions;

tions; that (since I (g) have elsewhere shewn, that God has not promis'd any supernatural Assistance in this Case) he who prays *extempore*, will in all probability be guilty of great Omissions. I confess, the more ready a Man's Memory is, the better (in this respect) will his Performances be: But the greatest part of those who officiate in Congregations, can't be suppos'd to have Memories sufficient for this purpose, and consequently they must very often fail. Nor do I doubt, but that the Matter of those *extempore* Prayers, which are pour'd forth by the most able Dissenters, would generally appear most wretchedly defective in this respect, if we had but Opportunities of examining it.

And this I do the rather believe, because Mr. Baxter himself, whom all the World knows to have been no Zealot for precompos'd set Forms, assures (h) us, that *some of the famousst Divines in the Church of God, and Non-Conformists of the greatest Name in England, found such a weakness of Memory, that they judg'd the Use of Forms the best Improvement of their own Gifts.* And saies he, *These all were famous worthy Men, whom no wise Man judgeth to be insufficient for the Ministry for want of Gifts. But if such as these may so many Years forbear the Exercise of their Gift of extemporary Prayer, much more may far weaker Ministers do it.*

Besides, this I am sure of, that whilst I attended the Dissenting Meetings, tho' I heard such a Variety of Prayers, and from so many different Teachers; yet I never once heard the least Syllable relating to the Forgiveness of Enemies, or any Expressions

(g) *Discourse of the Gift of Prayer* (annex'd to the *Brief History*.)

(h) *Cure of Church Divisions*, Part. I. Div. 32. p. 183. Lond. 1670.

pressions of Charity towards them, in any of their Prayers, except that once (and 'twas only once) the Lord's Prayer was us'd. And yet since what relates to the Forgiveness of Enemies and Charity towards them, particularly Prayer for them, are such a remarkable Branch of the Matter of Prayer, and so particularly hinted at in the Lord's Prayer, and so expressly commanded by our Savior; one would think it strange, that any one Man, much more that such a Number of Men, from different Parts of the Country, should for so long time utterly forget it. And if such a thing as this could escape the Observation of every Person then present, except myself; as I am very well assur'd it did; How many other Imperfections, think you, are daily pass'd over, and never taken any Notice of? Nay, had I those Prayers in writing, which I heard at the Dissenting Meetings; I don't question, but I should discover diverse other Omissions, which upon a bare hearing I did not observe.

But farther, as some Ministers will omit what ought to be inserted in their Prayers, through the Weakness of Memory; so we have too much reason to fear, that others may do it through Wilfulness. Dr. *Bastwick*, who was no Friend to our Establish'd Church, tells (i) us, that *many of the Independents and Sectaries will neither pray with the Presbyterians, nor for them; no, nor for King and Parliament, nor for the Assembly, &c.* so that they wilfully omitted all Prayer for Superiors, whomsoever they plac'd the right of Government at that time in. And why may not other Particulars be designedly omitted? Why may not Men omit praying for their Enemies

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(i) *The utter Routing of Independents and Sectaries*, Epist. to the Read. p. 19. Lond. 1646.

out of Principle? I'm sure the Use of *extempore* Prayers will never restrain such ill minded Persons.

I confess, the Dissenting Teachers have this Satisfaction, that their Prayers are very seldom or never taken in Writing, and expos'd to public View and Censure; and therefore their Congregations are not sensible, how many Particulars they frequently forget. However, by good luck, they themselves have publish'd some Prayers, which diverse of the most Eminent of the *Bartholomew* Martyrs pour'd forth *extempore*, when they Preach'd their farewell Sermons. Let me intreat the Reader to look over those Prayers; for he cannot but observe how grossly defective the Matter of them is. To mention no other Instances, 'tis very remarkable, that they are all of 'em to be charg'd with the very same Fault, which I have already observ'd in those *extempore* Prayers, which I heard at the *Colchester* Meetings. For there is not a Syllable of Forgiveness of Enemies, or any Expression of Charity towards them, in any one of those Performances; except that the Lord's Prayer is us'd twice, *viz.* by Dr. *Bates* and Mr. *Cradock*; for the rest do constantly omit it. And yet the Edition I use, is printed at *London* in the Year 1663. which (as the Title Page tells us) was *revis'd and corrected from the many Faults of former Editions*. Besides, one would think, that that very occasion of those Performances, should have put 'em particularly in Mind of that Branch of the Matter of Prayer.

2. As in *extempore* Prayers some Particulars are frequently omitted; so 'tis very observable, that to fill up the time, they are often unreasonably large upon diverse others; nay, many of the Dissenting Teachers when they are utterly at a loss, fall to a kind of *extempore* Preaching. They Address them-

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selves to the People in the midst of their Prayers; and when they have recover'd themselves, and gotten something to go on with, they return to Prayer again; so that their Prayers are by no means well compos'd, but (besides their Omissions) are full of Tautologies, Reflections, &c. Of this the printed Prayers of the *Bartholomew* Martyrs just now mention'd, are too plain a Proof; and 'tis too manifest, that the Worship of the Dissenters is ordinarily of the same kind. But 'tis their Misfortune, that they do not regard it. For if the Minister does but go on, and say something that affects and warms 'em; they are well satisfied and look no farther, and seem to desire nothing more. And if I may guess at their constant Worship by what I've observ'd my self from the better Sort of their Teachers, and learn'd from the Informations of others; I would never desire a better Argument to demonstrate even to themselves, the Truth of what I now assert, than a few of their *extempore* Prayers committed to Writing, and half an hours time, to furnish Objections against them.

3. In joint *extempore* Prayers diverse Particulars cannot but be too frequently inserted, which ought to be always omitted. For Instance,

First, How commonly do Men thrust their private Opinions into their Prayers, and thereby make their own Notions Terms of Communion with them! That the Dissenters are as fond of their particular Notions, as other Men, needs no Proof. And when once a Man is fond of a Notion, how easily does he mix it with his Devotions? Mr. *Baxter* (k) saies, *Every Separatist, Anabaptist, and Antinomian, doth too willingly put his Errors into his Prayers.*

(k) *Cure of Ch. Divis.* Part. 1. Div. 35. p. 201.

Prayers. On which Words (saies (l) Mr. Long) Mr. Bagshaw in his Antidote, p. 7. doth thus Paraphrase; By mentioning of Separatists as a distinct Body of Men from the Antinomians, Quakers and Anabaptists, it is evident he can mean no other but his Presbyterian and Congregational Brethren. However, Mr. Baxter, himself expressly (m) saies, I know, that every Erroneous Person (and doubtless there is a plenty of them, as to private doubtful Opinions, amongst the Presbyterians and Independents) commonly doth use to put his Errors into his Prayers, and Preaching.

Would to God the Dissenters would seriously consider this; and that their extempore Performances were not too great a Confirmation of this Truth. There are certainly many Opinions, which may be either believ'd or rejected without endangering Salvation; But yet on one side or other there must necessarily be an Error. And is it not a dreadful thing that a Congregation must be forc'd, either to join in, or to be disturb'd by, such Fancies, as any particular Minister is full of, and which may very probably be utterly false at the bottom? Such a Liberty, which in joint extempore Prayers is unavoidable, cannot but create infinite Confusions. And for my own part, I freely declare, that I could no more join in a Prayer, that was tainted with absolute Predestination, irresistible Grace, &c. or even with some Doctrines, which both the Dissenters and Churchmen do generally agree in, and which are accounted perfectly Orthodox by both Parties; than I could join in a Prayer to a Saint or an Angel. For tho' I do not say, that the one is as great a Sin as the other; yet I must own, that to me the one

(l) *Review of Mr. Baxter's Life*, p. 233. Lond. 1697.

(m) *Ibid.* p. 200.

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one would be as certainly a Sin as the other. For I cannot but think, that absolute Prædestination, irresistible Grace, &c. nay, and some Doctrines which others tho' of different Sects and Parties do greedily swallow, are as arrant Falshoods, as Transubstantiation it self.

And yet I appeal to the Dissenters themselves, whether he that joins in their *extempore Prayers*, will not frequently meet with such Passages, as necessarily imply the Belief of absolute Prædestination, irresistible Grace, &c. uttered by their most eminent Teachers. I confess, the contrary Opinions may also be inserted in joint *extempore Prayers*; and then the generality of the Dissenters themselves might find the unspeakable Inconvenience caus'd thereby. For every Party will be too forward in declaring their Notions in their Prayers. But certainly such a Liberty must enkindle everlasting Disturbances.

Nay, the Dissenters have often objected against the Common Prayer, that it contains some private Opinions, which are thereby made Terms of Communion; and at the Restoration they (n) propos'd, *that all the Prayers and other Materials of the Liturgy, may consist of nothing doubtful or question'd amongst Learned, Pious and Orthodox Persons; insomuch as the profess'd end of composing them is, for the declaring of the Unity and Consent of all who join in the public Worship; it being too evident, that the limiting of Church Communion to things of doubtful Disputation, hath been in all Ages the Ground of Schism and Separation.* They add, that to load our public Forms, with the private Fancies upon which we differ, is the most Sovereign way to perpetuate Schism to the Words

(n) *Accompt of the Proceedings*, p. 2, 3. Lond. 1661.

World's end. But then what they think an Objection against the Common Prayer, is much more so against *extempore* Prayers, wherein every Minister has an entire Liberty, and an arbitrary Power, and not only may, but commonly does insert his own private Opinions, without any possibility of a Remedy.

But saies a late (o) Writer, *'Tis very strange, if care may not be taken to prevent this without Forms: for my part, I profess, I'm as much an Enemy to the mixing my novel Fancies with public Devotions, as the most zealous Advocates for Forms can be; and if Men are not capable of discharging that Duty (or willing to do it) without affecting such Novelties, I think they are very unfit to be admitted to the Sacred Office.* In answer to this, I desire our Author to consider, not only what might be done, if the Churches Discipline were restor'd, and all that care were taken by both Spiritual and Temporal Superiors, which might possibly be taken, and all necessary Informations were readily and willingly given; without the Concurrence of all which Particulars this Evil cannot possibly be prevented: I say, I desire him not only to consider this, but also what has been, is, and will be, in our present State, and whether there be any probability of its being otherwise. If all the Ministers of the Gospel were such as they ought to be, and if none were admitted to the Sacred Office, but such as are really fit for it, and would discharge their Duty to the best of their Power, this Pretence would be the more plausible. But a very little Observation of the World will convince a Man, that there is an universal Corruption both amongst the Churchmen and the Dissenters;

(o) Mr. Pierce's *fifth Letter to Dr. Wells*, p. 17. *Land.* 1707.

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ters; and whilst that Corruption continues, the Evil we are speaking of is unavoidable. For I am sure, that as far as my Experience reaches (and I may be allow'd to know something of the Establish'd Clergy, and considering what Corner of the World I live in, of the Dissenters too), the Teachers of neither Party are universally, or even for the greater Part, fit to be trusted with a Liberty of performing their Public Offices *extempore*.

Nay farther, if we may have leave to think, that the Dissenters are as willing to act against their Subscriptions, &c. as they have been often pleas'd not only to think, but also in the most public manner to declare of the Clergy of the Establish'd Church; 'tis plain, that nothing can hinder their broaching the most cursed Heresies in their Prayers. In such a Case, the vilest *Socinian*, *Pelagian*, &c. may freely discharge his Poyson, &c. even in the Devotions of the Congregation into which (and 'tis no difficult Matter to get an Opportunity) he can insinuate himself. Nor do I see any likelihood of preventing this Evil, whilst such an unlimited Toleration continues; and every *Anabaptist*, *Quaker*, &c. is so freely licens'd to Preach.

Secondly, How commonly do Men vent their unmortify'd Passions in their Prayers! how frequently do they cast forth bitter Reflections, and betray the want of good Manners, in what they indiscreetly utter even to God himself! This is a Fault very much to be lamented, and manifestly inconsistent with a true Christian Spirit; particularly with that frame and temper of Mind, with which we ought to pray. But yet Experience proves that 'tis too common in joint *extempore* Prayers. I am loth to rake into old Stories for the Proof of this. Doubtless Mr. *Firmin*, who was a great Zealot for *extempore* Prayers,

Prayers, had good Reason to (p) say; *that some Men who call for praying by the Spirit, do in their Prayers vent their own Spirits, I deny not.* The Lord Clarendon (q) tells us, that all the Prayers and Sermons of the Scotch Presbyterians, at which they forc'd King Charles the Second to be present, *were Libels and bitter Invectives against all the Actions of his Father, the Idolatry of his Mother, and his own Maliginity.* 'Twere easy to give a great Variety of Instances nearer home. If the Reader will peruse but those very Prayers so often already mention'd, and which the Dissenters themselves made public; I am persuaded, he'll soon be convinc'd, that those who have been thought eminent for Piety, Prudence and Learning, could not forbear such Extravagances. Tho' there are more, I confess, in those printed Prayers; which I shall not point at: yet there is one particularly worth our notice. Mr. Cradocot saies, *Lord, thou requirest praying Hearts, but thou hast not commanded us to use Prayer-Books; and if thou wilt give us the Spirit of Prayer, we shall not need them.* p. 413. What reason Mr. Cradocot had to spit his Venom at this Rate, will soon appear; but this I am sure of, that these Words do so manifestly reproach the Establish'd Liturgy, which was for the future to be us'd in that Congregation; that they could not be otherwise intended than to imbitter the Minds of the People, and incense 'em against their Governors, who impos'd Prayer-Book-Worship.

I could add too great a Variety of Examples of a later Date, and such as are very well attested. But

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(p) *Discourse of impos'd Forms of Prayer*, annex'd to his *Presbyterial Ordination Vindicated*, p. 30. Lond. 1660.

(q) *Hist. Book* 13. p. 367. of the 8vo Edition, Oxf. 1706.

I forbear. However, I can't but repeat some Words of Mr. *Joseph Jacob* printed in the beginning of her Majesties Reign; because I hope, that those Dissenting Teachers, who maintain the Lawfulness of Occasional Conformity, and were Enemies to the passing of that Bill which was intended to prevent it, will either own the Truth of 'em, or call upon the Author to prove them. *Sure I am, saies (r) he, the insolent Liberty some take in their Prate and Prayers, may bring their Liberty into more Danger, than it would ever be expos'd to by some whom they revile.*

Thirdly, It too frequently happens, that in joint extempore Prayers Men utter such Doctrines, as they themselves do not believe; nay, I have just reason to fear that they do sometimes utter even Blasphemy it self, which (were they sensible of it) they would heartily abhor. And this they do, I am perswaded, not out of Design, but thro' mere hast and inadvertency. Having not time enough to consider what they say, and sometimes being in a hurry, at a loss, or in a confusion, they vent what comes first to their Tongues end; and what that is, the Event does too often plainly shew.

I could give diverse lamentable Instances of this kind, were I willing to revive and spread such things, as every good Christian would tremble to read, and cannot but heartily bewail, and wish buried in everlasting Silence. However, I shall take leave to mention one, purely for the sake of the Author of it, even no less a Man than Mr. *Cradock* himself; who begins that very Prayer, in which he express'd his Contempt of Prayer-Books already taken

(r) In his *Postscript to his Thanksgiving Sermon, entitul'd, The Words of God declar'd*, p. 39: Lond. 1702.

ken notice of, thus; *Most glorious and most gracious Lord God, who art God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast put thine own Name and Stamp upon this Day, the Lords Day; wilt thou be pleas'd to appear, &c.* In these Words he affirms, that the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ* had put his own Name and Stamp upon the Lord's Day. So that the Lord's Day, according to Mr. *Cradocot*, receiv'd its Denomination, not from the Lord *Jesus Christ*, but from the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. And yet I am perswaded, that Mr. *Cradocot*, notwithstanding his *extempore* Blunder, did firmly believe, that the Lord's Day is so call'd from the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and not from the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. But as he has express'd it, 'tis impossible to clear this Passage from rank Heresy, viz. that of the *Patropassians*, or *Sabellians*, or both. And had not this Man, think you, much better have us'd a Prayer-Book, than utter such heretical Falshoods? For a Man may as well say, *O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast shed thy own Blood for our Sins*; as that wretched Stuff, which Mr. *Cradocot*'s Prayer begins with. And if Mr. *Cradocot* could utter such wretched Stuff upon so solemn an Occasion, which notwithstanding was never taken notice of by any of the Congregation; what may we imagin, that the inferior Preachers do belch forth, in less discerning and less observant Congregations, and upon ordinary Occasions!

To this Instance I could add many more, and much worse, were I not unwilling to enlarge upon such odious Truths.

Now the best Security that can be had against all these intolerable Evils, arising from the Defect and Redundances in the Matter of Prayer; may be obtain'd by the joint Use of such precompos'd set
Forms

Forms as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. For tho' Heretics, Idolaters, &c. may certainly corrupt precompos'd Liturgies according to their several Humors; yet when a precompos'd Liturgy is well known and fix'd, a Man may be sure of the Matter of his Prayer, before he comes to the Church to offer it; and if the Faults of it be such as will justify a Separation, he may wholly abstain from it. And there is no doubt, but a well studied Liturgy, such as 'tis very possible for any Church or Congregation whatsoever to procure, may be easily render'd complete and exact as to the Matter of it, without being either faulty through defect, or cumber'd with Superfluities. If any particular Liturgy be not already such, 'tis the Fault of those whose Neglect is the cause of such an Imperfection. But certainly the Imperfection is not necessary; nor can it be accounted such by those who separate upon the account of a particular Liturgy; because 'tis easie for them to improve and amend a well known Liturgy, or to make a new one for their own use, and to render such a Liturgy infinitely more perfect, than 'tis possible for the best *extempore* Prayer in the World to be. This, I say, may be easily done; and they may set about it as lawfully and with as good Authority, as they can set up and continue the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*; and consequently, tho' the particular Faults of each particular Liturgy may be good Objections against that Liturgy in particular; yet they cannot be Objections against the Use of a well known Liturgy in general, which is all I am at present contending for.

If it be objected, that the Matter of a well known Liturgy cannot possibly be so perfect, as to reach all cases; and consequently there is sometimes a Ne-

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To this Instance I could add many more, and much worse, were I not unwilling to enlarge upon such odious Truths.

Now the best Security that can be had against all these intolerable Evils, arising from the Defect and Redundances in the Matter of Prayer; may be obtain'd by the joint Use of such precompos'd set
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Forms as the Congregation is accustom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. For tho' Heretics, Idolaters, &c. may certainly corrupt precompos'd Liturgies according to their several Humors; yet when a precompos'd Liturgy is well known and fix'd, a Man may be sure of the Matter of his Prayer, before he comes to the Church to offer it; and if the Faults of it be such as will justify a Separation, he may wholly abstain from it. And there is no doubt, but a well studied Liturgy, such as 'tis very possible for any Church or Congregation whatsoever to procure, may be easily render'd complete and exact as to the Matter of it, without being either faulty through defect, or cumber'd with Superfluities. If any particular Liturgy be not already such, 'tis the Fault of those whose Neglect is the cause of such an Imperfection. But certainly the Imperfection is not necessary; nor can it be accounted such by those who separate upon the account of a particular Liturgy; because 'tis easie for them to improve and amend a well known Liturgy, or to make a new one for their own use, and to render such a Liturgy infinitely more perfect, than 'tis possible for the best *extempore* Prayer in the World to be. This, I say, may be easily done; and they may set about it as lawfully and with as good Authority, as they can set up and continue the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*; and consequently, tho' the particular Faults of each particular Liturgy may be good Objections against that Liturgy in particular; yet they cannot be Objections against the Use of a well known Liturgy in general, which is all I am at present contending for.

If it be objected, that the Matter of a well known Liturgy cannot possibly be so perfect, as to reach all cases; and consequently there is sometimes a Ne-

cessity of joining in Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*; I answer, 1. that if this were really true, yet it appears from what has been said, that the far greatest part of the public Devotions, the Matter of which is constantly the same, may much better be compriz'd in a well known Liturgy, than in *extempore* Prayers. And consequently a standing Liturgy will answer the standing Necessities of the Church. And 'tis Nonsense to pretend, that *extempore* Prayers ought to be alwaies us'd, and a well known Liturgy be totally excluded, because a case may happen once in a Year, or perhaps once in seven Years, which a standing Liturgy has not provided for. But, 2. 'Tis very certain, that a well known Liturgy may very easily provide for all such accidental Cases, as commonly return. Nor could I ever yet hear of any such case, as the establish'd Liturgy (which notwithstanding I think capable of considerable Improvements) does not tolerably well provide for. Nor could I ever hear, whilst I attended the Dissenting Meetings, any one part of the Matter of Prayer mention'd, how particular soever, but what I could have inserted in our own general Forms. I confess, some great and special public Occasions may require particular Offices; and our Experience shews how easily, and how well they may be supplied.

But the great Mistake of our Adversaries seems to be this. They can't think it sufficient, unless the Minister enlarges upon the particular case. At this rate, if a Man hath the Gout, the same Prayer won't serve, which is proper for the Small-Pox. If a Man escapes a broken Neck, the same Thanksgiving won't serve, which is proper for escaping a Robbery. But they ought to remember, that public Forms ought not to mention too particularly the Circumstances of each Person. Nor does God re-

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quire such things from a Congregation. 'Tis sufficient if the Particulars be publicly mention'd according to the Practice of the Establish'd Church, and Notice be afterwards taken of 'em in the common Forms. Nor does God need a nice Description of a Disease, &c. dress'd up in a Variety of Phrases. In some cases we have particular well known Forms. But 'twould be absurd to furnish out a Liturgy according to the Conceits of our Adversaries.

But saies a late (s) Writer, *We felt some few Years since a most dreadful Judgment of God, I mean the great Storm, by which God did, no doubt, call us to Repentance. This happen'd on a Saturday. I ask then whether 'twas not proper on the next Day in our solemn Assemblies to take notice of this, and to humble our selves under the mighty Hand of God, and to deprecate such sore Instances of his Displeasure. This was not then neglected by such as us'd conceiv'd Prayer, which could reach such a case; but there was no Form prepar'd for our Brethren 'till some time afterwards. Now I shall by no means deny the Reasonableness of a particular Humiliation for the great Storm; but then I think it ought to be National, and at a time fix'd by Authority, as that of the Establish'd Church's was; and our Author owns that a Form was accordingly provided. But what necessity was there of such a full and particular Devotion the very next Sunday? Certainly 'twas very sufficient to thank God for the Deliverance the next Sunday (as any Person might well do by taking particular notice of it in the general Thanksgiving); and to stay for the*

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(s) Mr. Pierce's Defence of the Remarks on Dr. Wells's Letter to Mr. Dowley. Part 1. p. 17.

solemn Humiliation, 'till the whole Nation by public Appointment could join in it.

I must add, that (whether our own Liturgy may be judg'd defective in this Point, or no; yet) this can be no Argument against a well known Liturgy in general; since 'tis easy to furnish a well known Liturgy with such occasional Prayers, as may reach more particular Cases, than those in our own Liturgy seem to have been design'd for.

C H A P. VIII.

That diverse Imperfections cannot but attend joint extempore Prayers, with respect to the Expressions of Prayer; which Imperfections may easily be avoided in the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with.

SEcondly, diverse Imperfections, with respect to the Expressions of Prayer, cannot but attend joint *extempore* Prayers; which Imperfections may easily be avoided in the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. For,

1. The Misapplication of Texts and Phrases of Scripture is certainly an Imperfection. Now a Text or Phrase of Scripture is then misapply'd in Prayer, when either, 1. it is us'd in a wrong Sense, quite different from the Meaning of the Holy Penman; or 2. it is so obscure to the Congregation, that they can't understand the Meaning of what is spoken in Prayer. Now if the Misapplication be of the first sort, 'tis certainly

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certainly very pernicious. For it leads those Persons into Errors, who are ignorant of the true Meaning of the Text or Phrase: and disturbs the Devotion of those who understand it, and are sensible of the Misapplication of it. But if it be of the second Sort, then it utterly destroys the Nature of Prayer, as it is a rational Action, in which the Soul bears the principal Part. It makes the Congregation prate to God they know not what.

Now such Misapplications are utterly unavoidable in joint *extempore* Prayers. For even those who utter them best, do affect to use Scripture Texts and Phrases at every turn; and consequently, they cannot but misapply them frequently, one or both of the two waies before mention'd. And Experience does too plainly prove, that they do so. I could give wretched Instances of this kind, were it needful: but I shall confine my self to one, which our Adversaries themselves have been pleas'd to print.

No less a Man than Dr. *Jacomb* saies, p. 110. *We do refuse to come to Christ. We go about to establish a Righteousness of our own, and neglect the Righteousness of God by Faith in Jesus Christ.* These Words are manifestly taken from Rom. 10. 3. where St. Paul saies of the unbelieving Jews, that *they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of God.* Now how truly soever Dr. *Jacomb* and his Congregation might be said (in one Sense) to refuse to come to Christ, and to neglect the Righteousness of God by Faith in Jesus Christ; yet I am convinc'd, that what was by St. Paul said of the unbelieving Jews, could not possibly be applied to Dr. *Jacomb's* Congregation in St. Paul's Sense.

For 'tis plain, that that Establishment of a Righteousness of their own, in Contradistinction to the Righteousness by our Savior, which *St. Paul* charges the unbelieving *Jews* with; was their depending upon their Performance of the Ceremonial Law for Justification before God, and not embracing the Faith of Christ, whereby alone Justification or Righteousness could be obtain'd. And consequently the Words of *St. Paul* are most grossly misapplied to a Sense quite contrary to what *St. Paul* meant; nor could they in *St. Paul's* Sense be applied to *Dr. Jacomb's* Congregation, unless (which 'tis horribly uncharitable to imagin) they were turn'd *Jews*, and expected to be justified by the *Mosaic* Law.

Nor was it possible for the Doctor truly to affirm, that his Congregation did in any Sense go about to establish a Righteousness of their own in Contradistinction to that Righteousness which is by Faith in *Jesus Christ*. For by establishing a Righteousness of our own, in Contradistinction to that Righteousness which is by Faith in our Savior, nothing else can be meant, but an Endeavor to justify our selves in the sight of God without depending upon our Savior's Merits. I say, it must of necessity be understood to signify our relying upon our own Worth and Performances, and not upon the Worth and Sufferings of our Savior; our pretending to depend so much upon our own Worth and Performances, as to believe, that they alone will bear us out, and acquit us at the last great Day. Now even the *Popish* Doctrine of the Merit of good Works is not near so detestable as this; and I am persuaded, that not one of *Dr. Jacomb's* Congregation was guilty of such an execrable Tenet. And therefore they could in no Sense be said, to go about to establish their own Righteousness in Contradistinction

to that by Jesus Christ. What an arrant Falsehood therefore (besides the Misapplication of Scripture) did this eminent Man utter to God in Prayer in the Name of the whole Congregation? And what a vile Calumny did he cast upon himself and those that were assembled with him, in accusing them of what they were not in any wise to be charg'd with?

I could produce a Variety of other Instances out of the same Book; but this already given is more than sufficient. And if Dr. *Jacomb* could misapply Scripture at so strange a rate; what may we think of the generality of the Dissenting Teachers? I'm sure, whilst I attended the Dissenting Meetings, they were guilty of both these sorts of Misapplication of Scripture? Nay, I my self was several times puzzl'd with what they alledg'd. They us'd Phrases too dark and obscure for my Apprehension; and I presume, I've studied the Scriptures as much as any Man in those Congregations. Nay, I have several times not been able to put a tolerable Sense (whether the right one, or no) upon what they took from Scripture. How then could their Congregations join as they ought in those Scripture Expressions?

The Truth on't is, the Dissenters seem to think, that as long as they use Scripture Words, they are safe, and all is well. Whereas by the Misapplication of Scripture it may and does very often happen, that a Congregation may as rationally join in *Arabic* Prayers, as in some Part of those which the Dissenters offer up in Scripture Language. Nor indeed can the Evil, arising from the two Sorts of Misapplication before mention'd, be prevented, unless, 1. the respective Teachers be thorow Masters of the Sense as well as the Words of Scripture; and

2. the respective Congregations can rightly and readily understand whatever Scripture Language their Teachers chance to utter. But these things can't be expected, now that Miracles are ceas'd.

2. The Obscurity of the Expressions in Prayer is certainly a great Imperfection. For Men cannot join in what they do not tolerably well understand. Now in joint *extempore* Prayers nothing is more common, than such obscure Expressions, as a good part of the Congregation cannot tell what to make of. Nay, Preachers of the greatest Gifts (as our Adversaries speak) do frequently deliver their Prayers in such Language, as is in some measure an unknown Tongue. What has been already said concerning the Misapplication of Scripture, is a sufficient Proof of this. But that is not all. For,

First, There is nothing more usual in joint *extempore* Prayers, than such Words or Phrases as none but the Learned, or the better Sort, do know the Meaning of. Instances of this kind are innumerable. One shall suffice for the present. Mr. Watson begins his Prayer thus, p. 148, *O Lord God, all our Springs are in thee. It is good for us to draw nigh to thee thro' Jesus Christ. Thou art all Fulness, the Quintessence of all Sweetness, the Center of all Blessedness, &c.* Do you imagin, that Mr. Watson's Congregation were all of 'em acquainted with Quintessences, and Centers, and such like lofty Terms? And yet a Man cannot hear the Dissenting Teachers pray, without observing such Expressions as are equally obscure to the Vulgar. I am sure, the best that I ever heard, were faulty in this respect.

And indeed, how should it be otherwise? Is it not notorious, that when Men speak *extempore*, they have not time to pick and chuse the plainest Words, but must of necessity use such as are most
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natural to them, and do most readily occur? And can a Scholar then speak *extempore* in such Language, as the most unlearned can readily apprehend? Does he not find it impossible so to do even upon the most trite Subjects in ordinary Conversation? Does he not find a Necessity of explaining even common Terms, and bringing them down to their low Apprehensions? Nay, do we not all know how difficult it is even in Preaching; when we write every Word of our Sermons, and spend much Time, and take great Pains to find out plain Expressions; I say, do we not know how difficult it is even then to descend to vulgar Capacities? And do not the far greatest Part of our Auditories consist of such, as (tho' they may abound in Wealth, and look big, do notwithstanding) know very little, and are utterly unacquainted with such Expressions, as are familiar with Scholars? And must not these People, and even weaker than these, join in Prayers to God? And must they pray in such Language as is unintelligible to them? I tremble to think of the Mischiefs of *extempore* Prayers in this Respect. For I am morally certain, that there is not one *extempore* Prayer in an hundred, that the generality of the Congregation can understand throughout, and in which a great Part of it are not puzzl'd almost at every Sentence.

Nay, it cannot but often, and even commonly, happen, that (not a bare Epithet only, or such like inconsiderable Words as the Congregation may be ignorant of without much loss or hindrance; but even) the principal Verb of a Sentence; or its Nominative Case, or the Accusative Case that follows it, upon any one of which the whole Sentence depends; may be such a Word as the Congregation is not acquainted with, and do not understand. And
when

when this is the case, the Congregation must of necessity lose the whole Sentence. For tho' they may understand the rest of the Words; yet they cannot rationally offer them in Prayer, when they are ignorant of that, upon which all the rest of the Sentence does depend.

I confess, in *extempore* Discourses there is oftentimes a Remedy for this. A Man, if he perceives the Ignorance of such as hear him, may explain his Words by Paraphrases, Illustrations, &c. But will a Man do this, when he speaks to God? He will certainly be ashamed of such an Undertaking, as would render joint Worship ridiculous, and the Sport of Atheistical Wits.

But I observe farther (what every ones Experience will convince him of) that when a Man's Breast is warm, and his Passions rais'd (as a Minister's most certainly ought to be in Prayer) then he naturally affects and endeavors after such Words as are bigger than ordinary. He strives to speak with a peculiar Energy; and thinks that common Phrases han't Force enough to express what he means and feels within. This cannot but sometimes lead him to the use of such Phrases, as are out of the way, and above the level of ordinary Understandings. And consequently, tho' he speak never so properly, yet he is unintelligible to a mixt Congregation, such as the far greatest Part of Christian Congregations are.

But then, tho' 'tis impossible, for the Reasons already given, even for the most able Teachers, to pour forth *extempore* Prayers in such a manner, as that the Vulgar shall apprehend the Sense and Meaning of every thing contain'd therein; yet 'tis too plain, that many Dissenters, as well as others, do affect a bloated swelling Style, stuff'd with such Words and Phrases as are above ordinary Understandings.

ings. They imagin this to be a Beauty in Writing and Speaking ; and what is thus beautiful in their own Eyes, they take to be such in the Eyes of others also ; and accordingly either their Vanity or their Ignorance prompts them to expose it upon all Occasions, in their Prayers as well as their Sermons. And what wretched stuff, think you, must such conceited Men pour forth *extempore*? I have been amaz'd at the Instances of this kind, which I met with, whilst I attended the Dissenting Meetings.

Secondly, 'Tis the Misfortune of some Persons, that their Style is naturally perplex'd and intricate. Tho' their Words are plain and obvious, yet they put 'em so oddly together, and have such an Unhappiness of joining their Clauses, and winding up their Periods, and oftentimes of stuffing them with a Variety of Parentheses, perhaps one within another ; that sometimes a Man can't understand even their written Discourses without difficulty. I confess, this may be in a good measure rectified by Industry, when they pen their Thoughts, and bestow sufficient time in polishing what they write. But when they speak *extempore*, especially with such exalted Passions as ought to accompany Prayer, this Imperfection is unavoidable to them. Now many great and excellent Men of different Sects and Parties have labour'd under this Infirmary ; whose Worth notwithstanding, and Ministerial Abilities, none can call in question. The Dissenters can bear witness, that diverse of their own Number are defective in this Respect ; as appears by their Sermons and Writings.

Now what sort of Prayers would such Men pour forth *extempore*? If it oftentimes requires considerable Pains to understand their written Discourses ;
certainly

certainly their sudden Effusions must frequently be utterly unintelligible. And yet if all such Persons were refus'd Admission into the Ministry, both the Establish'd Church and the Dissenters had wanted some of their brightest Ornaments.

Thirdly, It often happens, that for want of leisure to deliberate, and because a proper Phrase does not readily occur, Men of good Understandings do tack such Words together, as tho' they are plain and obvious in themselves, are notwithstanding very obscure as they are then us'd. This cannot but be observ'd in *extempore* Conversation; nay, sometimes even in such Persons as have a great Fluency and Readiness of Expression; but much more in the generality of Men, who are not remarkable for a Volubility of Tongue. Now this Fault cannot but creep into *extempore* Prayers: and the Congregation in such a case can understand no more, than if the Minister officiated in *Hebrew*. Or if after some Thought and Consideration they can make a shift to guess at the Meaning; yet still it requires time to do it; and consequently they must of necessity lose a Part of the Prayer, whilst they are employ'd in unravelling the Sense of such Words, as are unluckily join'd or applied.

I shall give a few Instances of this kind. Mr. *Jenkin*, p. 52. has these Words, *Let us love Christ, and Evangelically keep his Commandments.* Again, he desires God to *smell a sweet Savor of Rest on these our poor Prayers.* Mr. *Watson* saies, p. 149. *What breathings of Unbelief and Hypocrisy is there now, when we approach unto thee?* Mr. *Cradock* saies, p. 413. *We have been exalted to Heaven in the Means of Salvation; but oh how short do we come of Knowledge to the Time and Means we have enjoy'd!* Let our Adversaries judge, whether the Meaning of these Expressions

pressions (to which I could add diverse others) be obvious; and whether some of these Phrases be not strangely us'd.

I must add, that when I attended the Dissenting Meetings, I have sometimes been forc'd to ruminate a good while upon some of their Expressions, before I could guess at what they meant by 'em. And how then could the rest of their Auditors readily join in them?

In a Word, every degree of Obscurity of Expression (from which Cause soever, of those before mention'd, it arises) is intolerable in Prayer. And I am convinc'd, (and I hope the Reader is so too, from what has been already said) that in *extempore* Prayers 'tis impossible wholly to avoid it. And consequently those who have so liberally charg'd the Establish'd Church of *England* with retaining some Tincture of *Rome*, are hereby prov'd to be frequently guilty of one of the grossest and most abominable Corruptions of *Popery*, viz. Public Prayers in an unknown Tongue. A little Reflection upon this Matter will make a good Man's Heart ache.

3. The generality of Teachers cannot but utter in their *extempore* Prayers many uncouth, ridiculous, and indecent Expressions. I have (1) elsewhere observ'd, that both the Members of the Establish'd Church and the Dissenters are fully agreed, 'that the Matter of all Prayers, whether in a set 'Form of Words, or conceiv'd *extempore* by us, 'ought to be decently express'd; that is, our Language must be significant and proper, free from 'such Words or Phrases, as are either base, coarse, 'rude, affected, light, apt to raise ill Ideas in Men, 'to move them to Laughter, &c. For tho' God will
' without

(1) *Brief Hist.* Ch. 1. p. 13.

without all doubt accept such Prayers as are express'd even indecently, when they are offer'd by a Person who is not able to do better; yet all Men are certainly bound to endeavor to express themselves as decently as they can. And 'tis acknowledged on both sides, that the want of such Decency of Expression, as might conveniently have been attain'd, is such a Blemish in our Prayers as we are oblig'd to remove. Now this Blemish can't possibly be remov'd, if we join in Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*.

For tho' some Teachers without doubt are so cautious and happy, as to prevent and avoid it; yet 'tis notorious that the generality of 'em cannot do so. Nay, Men who are of considerable Value, both for Piety and Learning, are frequently guilty of such Indiscretions in their *extempore* Prayers, as are really intolerable. Dr. *Bastwick* (u) speaking of the Independents and Sectaries, saies, *Such unbecoming Expressions they have in their Prayers to God, as would terrifie a truly consciencious and godly Man to hear them; as not long since one of them in London publicly speaking unto God in his Prayer, said, Right Honorable Lord God; which kind of Expressions, as they are blasphemous, so ridiculous, exposing Religion and the Sacred Ordinances of God to Ludibry and Derision*

Would to God the Dissenters in general were not guilty of the same Fault. I am sure, that (besides those already mention'd) there are such Passages in the printed Prayers of the *Bartholomew* Martyrs, as would make a Man vildly suspect the far greater Number of their most able Performers. For Instance, Mr. *Venning* saies, p. 255. *Oh, unlust us.*
Mr.

(u) *Utter Rousing, &c. Epist. to the Read. p. 12.*

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Mr. Jenkin saies, p. 51. *Let it be fair above Head, when it is dirty below.* Methinks these are but coarse Expressions, and very unfit for public Prayer. Mr. Watson saies, p. 149. *We are never out of tune to Sin, but alwaies out of tune to Pray.* Odd enough! But what follows in the very next Words, is remarkable. He saies, in the Name of his Congregation, *We give the World our male Affections, our strongest Desire.* Modesty will not suffer me to expose the Indecency of this Passage. If it be said, that it is borrowed from Scripture; I answer, that tho' the Epithet *male* is often found in Scripture; yet 'tis never join'd with *Affections*. A proper and Scriptural Phrase by ill Application makes a Jest; and that Epiphēt which sutes one Substantive, won't sute another. For the same Reason Mr. Cradocot was exceedingly to blame for saying in his Prayer, p. 414. *Any that are drawing nigh the time of their Travel, let the Armes of the All-sufficient God be under them.* Such Applications of the Scripture Metaphors are a Burlesque upon the Scriptures. We ought alwaies to consider, not only from whence a Similitude is taken, but also to what 'tis applied; or else we had much better forbear the use of them.

I could easily refer you to such Writers as would furnish you with numberless Instances of this kind of Folly. Mr. Seppens will give you a tast in his *Rex Theologus*, p. 53, 54. Lond. 1664. and I could mention diverse other Books, which are stuff'd with a Variety of the like Particulars. To which I could add such imprinted Relations, as would make a Man tremble to read them, and which I can give unquestionable Proof and Demonstration of; were I not unwilling to repeat such things as are a Reproach to Religion, and a Dishonor to that God whom they were address'd to. And indeed, what may not a
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Man very readily believe of the generality of the Dissenting Teachers, when such extraordinary Persons amongst 'em have been so abominably faulty, as I have shewn that diverse of the most eminent *Bartholomew* Martyrs were?

But I forbear. I shall rather take another Method with our Adversaries, which will be more apt to convince them of the Folly of their Way, and be much less provoking.

I have prov'd in the *Discourse of the Gift of Prayer*, that a Faculty of conceiving Prayers *extempore* is not promis'd in Scripture, and consequently that we have no ground to expect any greater Assistance from God in the wording our Prayers; than in the wording our Sermons. This being premis'd, I presume our Adversaries will readily grant, that Men do not express themselves more cautiously in their *extempore* Prayers, than in those Sermons or other practical Discourses which they publish to the World. Now our Adversaries cannot but be sensible what unguarded Expressions, what uncouth, ridiculous, and indecent things, diverse eminent Dissenters have publish'd in Sermons and other practical Writings.

Let them but look upon what I have said in the *Defence of the Discourse of Schism*, and suppose that Mr. *Lockyer* should pray in such Language as I have there quoted from him. Suppose (that I may produce but a single Instance) he should have us'd such Expressions as these, *O Lord, thou hast promis'd to come to us, and comfort us; be thou therefore pleas'd to do it, tho' thou hold thy Nose, whilst thou art comforting our stinking nasty Souls.* Suppose also, that Mr. *Gouge* and Mr. *Spepherd* should pray as arrant Nonsense, as I have shewn they have printed. Would it not be intolerable? And yet these Men have

have not been accounted the Refuse of the Dissenting Party. Nay, Mr. *Lockyer* himself was Provost of *Eaton*, and his Books have had several Editions. I could instance in many others, Men of Eminence and Figure, both formerly and lately, who have been greatly admir'd by the Dissenters. But I do not care for the Office of a Scavenger. However, if these Instances be not sufficient, I may perhaps submit to it hereafter. Now from hence we may fairly gather, how very imprudently the generality of the Dissenters must express themselves in their *extempore Prayers*. This Argument I do not care to enlarge upon; but I hope our Adversaries will duly consider it.

I confess, Mr. *Pierce* has (x) said, *I doubt not but that a Person attending to the Directions given by Bishop Wilkins, will not find the Difficulty about the Matter and Words of Prayer very great.* Now whether the Difficulty about the Matter and Words of Prayer be not very great to the generality of Dissenters, even tho' they should, as well as they are able, attend to Bishop *Wilkins's* Directions; may appear from what I have said in this and the foregoing Chapters. Bishop *Wilkins's* Directions will not remove all those Imperfections which I have mention'd. But what I would at present observe, is this, *viz.* that where there is one that does to any tolerable purpose attend to Bishop *Wilkins's* Directions, we have just Grounds to believe, that there are at least fifty who do not attend to them; but utter such crude, indigested, and abominable Stuff, as were it taken in Writing, they themselves would be ashamed to own. And what Method, I pray, can the Dissenters

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(x) Defence of the Remarks on Dr. *Wells's* Letter to Mr. *Dowley*, Part 1. p. 15. Lond. 1707.

senters in our present Circumstances take or propose, to keep such Persons from preaching? Or how will they be able to oblige them to attend to Bishop *Wilkins's* Directions? Or how will they give the generality of them such Parts and Industry, as Bishop *Wilkins's* Directions do require? And after all, how can they expect, that they will ever prove better, than the *Bartholomew* Martyrs did, whose Prayers I have given such a Taste of, as is sufficient to prejudice a Man against joint *extempore* Devotions?

But Mr. *Pierce* (y) instances in himself. *Tho' I would not boast, saies he, yet I may say this, that I liv'd some Tears among such as were forward enough to Criticize, and had often such for my Occasional Hearers, but never heard of a single Sentence in Prayer that was carp'd at by them, and yet I am nevertheless free to own, that I have not that Volubility of Speech and Easiness to express my self, which many have.* To which I answer, that one Swallow makes no Summer. Mr. *Pierce* may be singularly happy in Prayer, for ought I know. But yet I would offer these things to his Consideration. 1. May not he without a breach of Modesty suppose himself superior to the generality of the Dissenters? If he retains the Character he had whilst he liv'd at *Cambridge*; I'm sure he may. 2. What were those his occasional Hearers? Were they any other than the young Scholars of the University? And could such Persons be competent Judges of all those kinds of Imperfection, with respect to Matter and Words, which I have mention'd? They might probably be ready enough to carp, had they discover'd any gross Blunder; but are there not many other

Faults

(y) Ibid. p. 18. 19

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Faults in joint *extempore* Prayers, besides gross Blunders? And may not even some gross Blunders be committed, which are not discoverable, even to Men of standing, at the first Hearing? What does Mr. *Pierce* think of such as I have observ'd in some of the *Bartholomew* Martyrs?

The true way to make a Judgment of Mr. *Pierce's* Prayers, would have been by getting them taken in Writing, and afterwards bestowing a serious and deliberate Examination upon 'em. Let them be consider'd after the same manner, tho' not with the same Malice, as our Liturgy has been. And then 'tis possible, that Mr. *Pierce* himself might think 'em capable of being more than carp'd at. And as for his saying, that he has not that Volubility of Speech and Easiness to express himself which many have; I answer, that he may notwithstanding have a much greater Volubility and Easiness to express himself, than the greatest Part have. One in a thousand may be superior to him; but how many Inferiors has he? Besides a Man's Judgment, Learning, and Caution are not alwaies equal to his Volubility of Speech: for 'tis too often found, that he talks worst, who talks most readily. And how very apt the generality of Dissenters cannot but be to talk very ill in some respect or other in their *extempore* Prayers, notwithstanding their greatest Volubility of Tongue, may appear from what I have said already.

On the other hand, 'tis notorious, that all these Imperfections which relate to the Expressions of Prayer, may be very easily avoided in the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with.

1. As for the Misapplication of Scripture. If any Passage or Phrase thereof be us'd in a wrong Sense; whensoever 'tis discover'd, it may be easily remov'd, and a fitter Expression plac'd in its room. And as for the Obscurity of any Scripture Expressions, 'tis impossible that it should be charg'd upon a well known Form. For whatever the Expressions be, tho' they be obscure at the first hearing; yet since they are fix'd in their Places, and alwaies the same, the most ignorant Person may easily inquire, and be inform'd about the Meaning of them, and in what Sense they are there us'd. Whereas 'tis impossible for 'em so to do in joint *extempore* Prayers; the obscure Expressions of which cannot be render'd intelligible to the whole Congregation, unless (which 'tis Nonsense to suppose) the whole Congregation can be so well acquainted with the whole Phraseology of Scripture, as upon the first hearing readily to understand and join in whatever Scripture Expressions the Minister utters *extempore*.

2. As for the Obscurity of other Expressions, which are not Scripture, 'tis very easily avoided in the use of well known Forms, from whatsoever Cause the Obscurity may arise. For, 1. if the Phrases are such as none but the Learned or better sort do usually understand; yet when once they are fix'd in a Liturgy for constant Use, the most ignorant may easily inquire the Meaning of 'em. And when they are once inform'd, their constant Repetition of 'em makes it impossible for 'em to be ignorant for the future. 2. If the Style of the Liturgy should be perplex'd and intricate, it may easily be amended and made more easie and plain; and even tho' that be not done, yet such a perplex'd and intricate Style as upon a bare hearing is utterly unintelligible, may be render'd very intelligible, even

to weak and ignorant Persons, after a serious Perusal and due Consideration. 3. For the same reason 'tis easy to understand those Words (if any such there be in a settled Liturgy) which are oddly tack'd together, and may at first hearing be obscure upon the Account of their being us'd or applied in an undue and uncommon manner.

3. As for uncouth, indecent, and ridiculous Expressions, nothing is more plain, than that they may easily be avoided in well known Forms. Whatever may have been unwarily put in at first, by frequent Use will be discover'd, and may be remov'd without any Difficulty.

If it be said, that the Expressions of some Liturgies are not amended after frequent Remonstrances; I answer, (as I did before with respect to the Imperfections relating to the Matter of Prayer) that this cannot be pleaded by our Adversaries. For if they do not approve any Liturgy that is at present extant; they may either reform an old one, or compose a new one, for their own use, as lawfully and with as much Authority, as they can set up and continue the use of joint *extempore* Prayers. And consequently, tho' the particular Faults of each particular Liturgy may be good Objections against that Liturgy in particular; yet they cannot be Objections against the use of a well known Liturgy in general, which is all I am at present contending for.

C H A P. IX.

That the joint Use of Prayer conceiv'd extempore hinders Devotion, and consequently displeases God: whereas the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion, and consequently is commanded by God.

THESE things being premis'd, 'twill be no difficult matter to shew, that the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* hinders Devotion, and consequently displeases God: whereas the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion, and consequently is commanded by God.

For I have shewn, that 'tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every part of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*; nay, that they cannot possibly join in above one half, that is, in every other Clause or Sentence thereof, even tho' the Matter and Expressions of it were such, as are fit to be offer'd to God, and for the Congregation to join in. But then it must be farther observ'd, that 'tis utterly impossible for any Person to pour forth a Prayer *extempore* so contriv'd, as that tho' every other Clause or Sentence be omitted, the rest of the Prayer shall retain due Sense and Connexion. And consequently 'tis impossible for the Congregation to join in every Part even of the remaining half of the Prayer. I have also shewn, that the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd

ceiv'd *extempore* hinders the due Exercise of the Affections of the Congregation in Prayer; and that many Imperfections, with respect both to Matter and Expressions, do attend the joint use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*. And 'tis evident, that the Devotion of the Congregation cannot but be very much hinder'd by those Inconveniences, Disturbances and Interruptions, which such Imperfections cannot but very frequently create. Now that way of praying in which the foremention'd Particulars are thus unavoidable, does most certainly hinder Devotion. And consequently the joint use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*, upon which they are so justly and necessarily to be charg'd, does most certainly hinder Devotion.

But then on the other hand, I have shewn, that all these Evils are easily avoided in the joint use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. For I have made it appear, that the Congregation may without any difficulty join in every Part of well known Forms; and that their Affections may accompany their Words in the most perfect manner; and that those Imperfections, with respect both to Matter and Expressions, which in joint *extempore* Prayers are unavoidable, may most effectually be either totally prevented, or immediately cur'd, by the use of well known Forms. And consequently the joint use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion.

But it may be pretended, that tho' the Devotion of the Congregation is hinder'd by joint *extempore* Prayers, and most effectually promoted by well known Forms; yet the Devotion of the Minister,

or other Person that officiates, is not only not hinder'd, but also promoted, by conceiving Prayers *extempore*, much more than it can be in the use of well known Forms. To this I answer,

1. That supposing all this were true, yet we are not to have regard to the Minister only, but also and chiefly to the Congregation that joins with him, who are the far greater Number, and who are as much bound to pray, and bound to pray in as perfect a manner, as the Person that officiates. Wherefore that way of joint Prayer is most certainly best, which does most of all secure the Devotion of the whole Number. And consequently the joint use of well known Forms is to be preferr'd before the joint use of *extempore* Prayers; because I have shewn, that many intolerable Evils do attend the joint use of *extempore* Prayers, with respect to the Congregation that joins in 'em, none of which do attend the joint use of well known Forms. And as for the Person that officiates, tho' it were never so certain, that he could not enjoy as great Advantages in the use of well known Forms, as in conceiving Prayers *extempore*; yet he enjoys the same Advantages, which the Congregation enjoys. And surely the general Good ought to be preferr'd, nor must the whole Congregation be intolerably hinder'd in their joint Devotion, purely for the sake of him that officiates, and that the Devotion of the Minister may be increas'd. But,

2. This Pretence is in reality false. For the Devotion of the Minister is not promoted by conceiving Prayers *extempore*, any more than by the use of well known Forms. Nay, he has this great Advantage in the use of well known Forms, above what 'tis possible for him to enjoy in conceiving Prayers *extempore*, viz, that in the use of well known Forms
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his Mind is not in the least taken up or imploy'd in the Invention, Recollection, or Disposition of the Matter of Prayer, or in finding out apt Expressions; all which Operations he that conceives a Prayer *extempore* must of necessity perform, as Occasion requires. Nor is any thing in the World more manifest, than that even the ablest Concoivers of *extempore* Prayers are sometimes at a loss, both for Matter and Words, which he that uses a well known Form, either reads in a Book, or repeats by heart, without any difficulty. So that he who uses well known Forms, has nothing at all to distract his Mind, but may imploy the whole Force of it in such Operations, as are most suitable to the Duty of Prayer: whereas he that conceives a Prayer *extempore*, can't possibly do this. Because he must of necessity be sometimes interrupted by Invention, &c. and if he chances to commit any Mistake as to Matter or Expressions, he is immediately in Confusion, his Soul is disorder'd, and the intense Devotion of his Mind is utterly destroy'd.

It may be said perhaps, that when a Person conceives a Prayer *extempore*, he has an opportunity of expressing the present Sense of his Mind, and speaking what he does at that time actually and inwardly feel; whereas he that uses a well known Form, is utterly confin'd. But I answer, that he who uses a well known Form, does also express the present Sense of his Mind, and speak what he does at that time actually and inwardly feel; unless he prays in Hypocrisy, and has Impudence enough to lie to God in Prayer. Yes, but 'twill be said, that he who conceives a Prayer *extempore*, can enlarge, as his Heart is enlarg'd. Yes, and he can forget and blunder too, as his Memory and Invention fails him. But what is this to the purpose? The Business of
joint

joint Prayer is not to express the Minister's particular Case, but the Case of the Congregation in general, as they are a Number of Christians met for public Worship. And the Matter of a Congregation's Prayer is not to be enlarg'd according as the Minister is then dispos'd; but alwaies to be suited to the Case of the whole Number there assembled. And the Matter of their Prayer (as has been already shewn) will be much more complete and suitable, and consequently their Devotion will be much more promoted, by the joint use of such precompos'd set Forms, as they are accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; than it can possibly be by the joint use of such Prayers as the Minister pours forth *extempore*.

It appears therefore, that the Devotion even of the Person that officiates, is not at all hindred, but really secur'd and promoted by the joint use of such precompos'd set Forms as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. Whereas it can never be secur'd or promoted by conceiving Prayers *extempore*, but is oftentimes hindred and disturb'd thereby. And therefore I may safely assert in general Terms, *viz.* with respect both to the Person that officiates, and the Congregation also, that the joint use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* hinders Devotion; whereas the joint use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with, does most effectually secure Devotion.

Now that way of praying which does so grievously hinder Devotion, does most certainly displease God; and that way of praying, which does most effectually promote Devotion, is most certainly commanded by God; provided that it be in our Power, consistently with our bounden Duty in all other respects, to chuse which of the two ways of praying

praying we think fit. For this must of necessity be acknowleg'd, that if God has made it impossible for us to use that way of praying which is in it self the best; or if our chusing the best way of praying be utterly inconsistent with some other Duty, which (all things consider'd) we are indispensably bound to perform; in such cases it cannot be a Sin in us not to chuse the best way of praying. But as for our selves, who cannot plead either an Impossibility of using the best way of praying, or that that way of praying is inconsistent with some other Duty, which (all things consider'd) we are indispensably bound to perform; 'tis most evident, that God cannot but be displeas'd with us, if we (neglecting the use of well known Forms) do wilfully join in Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*; and that God does undoubtedly command us to join in the use of such precompos'd set Forms, as we are accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. The use of the one sort of Prayers is sinful to us, and the use of the other sort is unquestionably requir'd of us. For we are bound to serve God as well as we are able; and to offer him a less perfect Service, when 'tis in our Power to do better, is to offer him the Blind and the Lame; which Offerings (tho' he will accept them at the hands of such as can offer no better; yet if they are offer'd by us, who can offer much better) he will most certainly, not only despise, but reject with Indignation, and severely punish us for the gross Affront, which we thereby put upon his most Adorable Majesty.

C H A P. X.

Brief Reflections upon diverse Particulars.

I Must now bestow a few brief Reflections upon some Particulars, which 'tis possible the Reader may think worth my Notice; and such as I ought not to pass over in Silence.

1. Then, Mr. Calamy, giving an Account of the late Revolution, has (2) these Words; *The Body of the Nation heartily fell in with the Prince, and a mighty Revolution was brought about without Blood-shed. Interest wrought a Change in Mens Opinions. They that alwaies condemn'd the Principles of taking up Arms in Defence of Liberty and Property, now thought it both lawful, highly laudable and absolutely necessary. But one Hardship they were under at the time of the Revolution, which was a sensible Conviction to many, of the great Inconvenience of being under a Confinement to particular Forms in Divine Worship. While they privately pray'd for the Prince of Orange's Prosperity, they were forc'd in publick to pray according to the Liturgy, that God would be the Defender and Keeper of King James, and give him Victory over all his Enemies. But God, to the unspeakable Comfort of the Nation, preferr'd their private Prayers before those that were publick. In this Passage the Author furnishes us with an Objection against a settled Liturgy, drawn from the suppos'd Inconveniency of being under a Confinement to such an one at that time; when he insinuates, that the public Prayers of the Establish'd Church contradicted the private Prayers of her Members. But,*

First,

(2) *Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life*, ch. 14. p. 630. Lond. 1702.

First, If it were granted, that such an Inconveniency may sometimes arise from being under Confinement to particular Forms; yet I desire our Author to remember, that his Argument may be retorted. For he can't but know, that those who officiated *extempore* in the late great Rebellion, because they would not be confin'd to particular Forms, daily pray'd Sedition, Rebellion, Treason; I had almost said, Blasphemy. And I'm perswaded, that such praying as that was, is every whit as criminal, as praying against the Success of the then Prince of Orange. But,

Secondly, There was no such Inconsistency between the public and the private Prayers of the Members of the Establish'd Church, as our Author uncharitably insinuates; even tho' we suppose the Members of the Establish'd Church to have been never so heartily and universally in the Interest of the Prince. For when we pray in general Terms, that the Prince Regnant may vanquish and overcome all his Enemies; nothing else either is or can be meant, but that he may vanquish and overcome all those who are unjustly his Enemies. For I appeal to the Conscience of any unprejudic'd Person, whether the Words do necessarily import, or whether the Church could be suppos'd to intend, that we desire God to prosper the Prince Regnant in all his Wars, whether his Cause be just or no. Are not such general Terms commonly us'd and understood with this Restriction, both in the Holy Scriptures, and in all sorts of Writings, and in ordinary Conversation? When Children are commanded to obey their Parents *in all things*, are they thereby injoin'd to cut Throats, if their Parents bid 'em do it? When the Dissenters bestowed such lavish Compliments upon King *James II.* and vowed

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(with such a seeming Sincerity, that that unhappy Prince believ'd them) that they would stand by him against all his Enemies; did they think themselves oblig'd to stand by him in Opposition to any Person whatsoever, that should happen to be engag'd against him in a righteous War, and consequently in Opposition to the Prince of Orange himself? How then could Mr. *Calamy* dare to charge so great a Body of Men with the most detestable Hypocrisy, in offering up such Prayers in the Church, as they daily contradicted in their Closets?

I confess, if any other Prayer, particularly pointing against the Prince, was us'd upon that Occasion; then whosoever thought the Prince's Expedition just, was guilty of a great Sin in using it. But what is this to our settled Liturgy? Do we engage our selves to use all the Prayers that any Prince whatsoever shall injoin? Or does our natural Obligation to Obedience force us to comply with the Prince Regnant in using an unlawful Prayer, any more than it forces the Dissenters to comply with him in any other unlawful Instance? If the Omision of such a Prayer exposes Men to suffering, they must chearfully submit: Nor is it the first time that Men have suffer'd for a Liturgy, as our Author well knows. But must that Possibility of suffering be urg'd against the Establishment of a Liturgy? Why then, it may also be urg'd against *extempore* Prayers, for which our Author also knows, that many Persons have suffer'd.

Wherefore, if the Prince's Expedition was just, the Continuance of the usual Expressions of the Prayer for the Prince Regnant, was not praying against the Prince's Success. And if any other Prayer was injoin'd, the Members of the Establish'd Church

Church were no more oblig'd to use it, than the Dissenters were oblig'd to bring in *Poper*y, in compliance with the King.

But it may be objected, that if this be the true Meaning of those Expressions; then the Prayer for the Prince Regnant may be us'd for a Prince *de facto*, who has no other Right to the Throne than what bare Possession gives him. To this I answer, that it may certainly be so us'd, when once the Prince is settled in the Throne. For how backward soever a Subject may at first for good Reasons be, in offering up that Prayer for one whom he verily believes to be an Usurper; yet when once the Kingdom has submitted, either willingly, or by Compulsion, the nature of Society, and the Consideration of the publick good, will warrant a peaceable Submission to the Usurper's Government, and the offering up such Prayers for him, as do not declare his having an unquestionable Right, but only contain such Expressions, as may properly be us'd of a Prince Regnant; and such Petitions for him, as are necessary in order to the common Welfare, during the time of his Administration. And I am persuaded, that (whatsoever specious Arguments may be brought to the contrary, which I shall not now digress into the Consideration of) the Practice of the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians (which is a Precedent beyond dispute) will justify the Truth of this Assertion. For thus they acted, even when the Usurpations were manifest, and the right Heir was well known. Nor do I remember a single Instance, wherein any of 'em refus'd such a Compliance.

2. It has been often objected, that in the Reign of King *James* the Second, the Members of the Establish'd Church pray'd God to keep and strengthen

strengthen him in the true worshipping of him; which Expressions are thought unfit to be us'd for a *Papist* Prince. To this I answer,

1. That tho' these Expressions were without doubt intended for *Protestant* Princes, yet they may be applicable even to *Papists*. I grant it was not the original Design of the Words; but yet the Words are fairly capable of that Sense. For the Worship of Christians is as properly the true worshipping of God, in Opposition to that of the *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Pagans*; as the Worship of *Protestants* is the true worshipping of God, in Opposition to that of the *Papists*. And since the Words are fairly capable of that Sense, there could be no Impropriety or Prevarication in the use of them at that time; especially considering, that the Members of the establish'd Church, particularly the Clergy, were well known to abhor Popery, and could not be suppos'd to believe or say, that the Worship of the *Papists* was the true worshipping of God in Opposition to that of the *Protestants*. But,

2. If the Words were not fairly capable of that Sense; then they ought to have been alter'd. And if they were not alter'd, when there was just Reason for it, the Fault was to be charg'd upon the Church Governors. But this can be no Objection against a settled Liturgy in general; any more than the Continuance of an inexpedient Act of Parliament, is an Argument against Acts of Parliament in general; or than the use of a wrong Translation of the Bible, is an Argument against the use of Translations in general.

3. It may be ask'd, how 'tis possible upon my Principles, for the Members of the Establish'd Church to join in those Prayers, which are us'd upon those Daies of Thanksgiving and Fasting,
which

which the State appoints upon particular Emergencies. I answer, that 'tis impossible for them to join as they ought in those Offices, unless they peruse 'em before-hand, and thereby make themselves acquainted with 'em; as the generality of People may do, if they please, without any great Trouble or Charge. Tho' by the way, with all possible Submission and Deference to the Judgment of our Governors, I could heartily wish, that those Prayers were printed (as they may very well be) after such a manner, that the Copies should not cost above one Farthing or a half-penny a piece. For then they would be more universally bought, and consequently they would the more effectually serve the Interest of Religion, and answer the Ends of those Holy-Daies.

But were it quite otherwise; were it impossible for the generality of People to be acquainted with those Prayers before-hand; yet this is no Objection against, but rather an Argument for, the use of well known Liturgies, whensoever 'tis possible. Nor can it be pretended, that Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* have any Advantage in this Respect above appointed Forms. For if the People can't be acquainted before-hand with occasional printed Forms, much less can they be acquainted before-hand with *extempore* Prayers.

4. Those Pulpit Prayers, which too many of the Conforming Clergy do use before their Sermons, may be thought liable to the same Objections, which I've made against the joint use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*. Now suppose this to be true, yet 'tis no Argument against what I have written and prov'd. For then the Conforming Clergy must leave those Pulpit Prayers.

And indeed I don't know, to what good Purpose they ever did or can serve. They are flatly inconsistent with the Letter of that Subscription which we are requir'd to make by the thirtieth Canon. For in subscribing the second of those Articles which are there specified, we promise, not only to use the Book of Common Prayer, but also to use *none other Form of Prayer in publick Prayer and Administration of Sacraments*. They are also flatly inconsistent with the Letter of the Act for Uniformity, 1 Eliz. which declares, *That if any manner of Parson, Vicar, or other whatsoever Minister, that ought or should sing, or say Common Prayer mention'd in the said Book, or minister the Sacraments, from, and after the Feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next coming, refuse to use the said Common Prayer, or to minister the Sacraments in such Cathedral, or Parish Church, or other Places, as he should use to minister the same, in such Order and Form, as they be mention'd, and set forth in the said Book; or shall wilfully, or obstinately standing in the same, use any other Rite, Ceremony, Order, Form, or manner of Celebrating of the Lord's Supper openly, or privily, at Mattens, Evensong, Administration of the Sacraments, or other open Prayers, than is mention'd, and set forth in the said Book, (open Prayer in, and throughout this Act, is meant that Prayer which is for other to come unto, or hear, either in common Churches, or private Chappels, or Oratories; commonly call'd the Service of the Church), or shall preach, declare or speak any thing in the Derogation, or depraving of the said Book, or any thing therein contain'd, or of any Part thereof, and shall thereof be lawfully convicted, according to the Laws of this Realm, by Verdict of twelve Men, or by his own Confession, or by the notorious Evidence of the*
Fact;

Fact; he shall lose and forfeit to the Queen's Highness, her Heirs, and Successors, for his first Offence, the Profit of all his Spiritual Benefices, or Promotions, coming, or arising, in one whole Year next after this Conviction; and also that the Person so convicted shall for the same Offence suffer Imprisonment by the Space of six Months, without Bail or Mainprize. And if any such Person once convict of any Offence concerning the Premises, shall after his first Conviction, afterwards offend, and be thereof in Form aforesaid lawfully convict: That then the same Person shall for his second Offence suffer Imprisonment by the Space of one whole Year, and also shall therefore be depriv'd ipso facto of all his spiritual Promotions; and that it shall be lawful to all Patrons, or Donors of all and singular the same spiritual Promotions, or of any of them, to present, or collate to the same, as tho' the Person or Persons so offending were dead; and, that if any such Person, or Persons, after he shall be twice convicted in Form aforesaid, shall offend against any of the Premises the third time, and shall be thereof in Form aforesaid, lawfully convicted; that then the Person so offending, and convicted the third time, shall be depriv'd ipso facto of all his spiritual Promotions, and also shall suffer Imprisonment during his Life. Now 'tis plain, 1. that these Pulpit Prayers are other Forms of Prayer than those in the Common Prayer-Book, and that they are us'd in public; and consequently that we promise by our Subscription not to use 'em; 2. that these Pulpit Prayers are such other open Prayers, or part of the Service of the Church, as the Act for Uniformity forbids. For the Act declares that by open Prayer in, and throughout this Act, is meant that Prayer which is for other to come unto, or hear, either in common Churches, or private Chappels, or Oratories; commonly call'd the

Service of the Church. And consequently these Pulpit Prayers are forbidden by Act of Parliament.

How far an inveterate Custom may excuse the Conformists in this Practice, and reconcile it with their Subscriptions, and excuse 'em from the Sin of transgressing so plain a Law; I shall not inquire. The Reader may consult if he pleases, Bishop *Wetenhall's Treatise of Gifts and Offices*, Part 1. Ch. 4. p. 176, &c. printed at *Dublin*, 1679. But this I freely declare, that I can't vindicate those Pulpit Prayers; and never did, and ('till I see better Reason for it) never will use them. I am sure they have done a great deal of Mischief, by teaching giddy People to despise the Common Prayer; but I never could understand, that they did any Good. If it be said, that they bring some People to Church; I answer, that the Reason is, because they think it makes the Church resemble the Meetings; for which Compliment perhaps those that use such Prayers will hardly thank me, because 'tis Truth. But did these Prayers ever make one single Person a true Churchman? Did they ever reconcile any Body to the use of settled Forms; and bring 'em off from their beloved Vice of hearing Prayers instead of praying? If Men come to Church to be tickled with what the Minister speaks to God, and not jointly to offer up the same Prayers themselves; they come to little or no purpose. And the true Way to make 'em good Church-men, and consequently good Christians, is not to cherish that accursed Notion, which roots out true Piety, and is the Support of the present Separation; but to enforce the Necessity of a joint personal Address to God, by Sermons and Examples too. I could easily enlarge; but perhaps I have said so much already, as will hardly be forgiven me.

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However, tho' I condemn these Pulpit Prayers as the Reader cannot but perceive; yet I think myself oblig'd to do 'em Justice notwithstanding. And, 1. Tho' they are faulty, yet they are not so faulty as joint *extempore* Prayers. For, because they are generally precompos'd with pretty tolerable Care, therefore they are not so liable to those Imperfections with respect to Matter and Expression, which joint *extempore* Prayers are unavoidably subject to. Tho' by the way, I could name such Particulars in the Pulpit Prayers of Men that make a Figure, as I've been heartily asham'd of. Besides, these Pulpit Prayers being (generally speaking) always the same, they are corrected by time; and tho' they are at first chargeable with Indiscretions, yet they are gradually refin'd, and become tolerably perfect at last. 2. Because they are (generally speaking) always the same, therefore the People may join in every part of that Prayer, which they have been accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; and their Affections may also accompany the Prayer from the beginning to the end; which things, as I've shewn, are impossible in the joint use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*. But then when the People hear a variety of Ministers, as in some Congregations they very frequently do, the Pulpit Prayers are meer Amusements, and can't be join'd in as they ought. Wherefore tho' these Pulpit Prayers are in my Opinion upon many Accounts inexcusable, yet they are not so intolerable as the joint Prayers conceiv'd *extempore*. And in some Circumstances they are much more tolerable than in others.

As for that bidding of Prayers, which is practis'd by some, and grounded upon the fifty fifth Canon, 'tis a tolerable, tho' a needless Practice. As it does

no good, so it does no harm. And indeed I can't but think, that the Clergy (unless it be particularly injoin'd by their respective Diocefans) are under no Obligation to continue that Custom. They may retain it, if they please; or they may let it alone. For the Canon is manifestly obsolete. And indeed, had not the Practice of those Days explain'd it, and shewn what the Convocation meant, the Expressions in the Title and those in the Body of that Canon, would be contradictory. So that 'tis highly reasonable, that it should be either wholly laid aside, or so review'd and alter'd, as to make it speak consistently with the Design of it. Wherefore those who dislike Pulpit Prayers of a private Composition, and care not for the bidding of Prayers, may use the Collect, *Prevent us, O Lord, &c.* with the Lord's Prayer. For these being Parts of the Establish'd Liturgy, and the Collect being one of those which may be us'd at the Discretion of the Minister, and what every Congregation is accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with; the use of this Collect with the Lord's Prayer removes all Difficulty.

5. If any Dissenting Teachers should pretend, that their public Prayers are precompos'd, tho' they are alwaies new; I answer, 1. that then they should tell their People as much, and thereby endeavor to abate their inordinate Love of that *extempore* trash, which they are so fond of to their own unspeakable Mischief. 2. That even such a Practice, tho' better than that of conceiving public Prayers *extempore*, is still liable to those Inconveniences which I've already observ'd, with respect to the Act of joining in Prayers, and the Affections which ought to accompany it; not to mention those Inconveniences, with respect to Matter and Expression, which are inseparable from joint *extempore* Prayers, and which (if the
Reader

Reader will reflect upon the Particulars) must of necessity cleave in a great measure to such precompos'd set Forms, as are alwaies new, and prepar'd by the respective Ministers for the use of their own Congregations,

6. It may be said, that diverse of my Arguments will prove as much against the use of *extempore* Prayers in private, as against the joint or public Use of 'em. To this I answer, *First*, that those Arguments which are drawn from the Impossibility of joining in every Part of a Prayer conceiv'd *extempore*, and from the Impossibility of the Affections accompanying the Prayer as they ought, can't be urg'd against *extempore* Prayers in private. *Secondly*, that with respect even to the Matter and Expressions of Prayer, I can't but think it advisable to use precompos'd set Forms in our private Devotions. For I can't believe, that the Matter of our private Devotions can be otherwise tolerably perfect. For certainly, in our Retirements we ought to be more particular, than 'tis decent for us to be in public, Especially in our Intercessions, wherein we exercise the most extensive Charity, we ought frequently to run over the several Circumstances and Conditions of Men, and beg of God such Blessings for 'em, as we our selves should desire, were our case what theirs is. In other Parts of Prayer also 'tis fit we should sometimes be very full and particular. But this, I believe, is ordinarily impossible, unless we are assisted by Forms. Nor do I suppose, that even in the daily course of Morning and Evening Prayers, 'tis possible for us to avoid frequent considerable Omissions, unless we secure our selves by well consider'd Forms. The Expressions also of *extempore* Prayers in private must often be very bald, and below the Dignity of the Duty, and unworthy to be offer'd to that God whom they are address'd to. And consequently I would by all means persuade

Men to the Use of precompos'd set Forms in private. And, were it needful so to do, I could prove, that the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians practis'd accordingly.

But then I must also add, that I do by no means condemn all *extempore* private Devotions. Those who are careful and considerate, and who will think sufficiently before they speak (as Ministers can't, when they officiate in public, have always time to do), may well be allow'd sometimes to utter the Fulness of their Hearts to God in their Closets, and here and there to enlarge upon, and add to, the Forms they propose to use. I can't but advise Men also, when they have rais'd themselves up to a spiritual frame of Mind, and an habitual Devotion, to be frequent (I had almost said, constant) in ejaculatory Prayers, besides their stated Devotions. They should remember, that they are ever in the Presence of God, their best, their dearest Friend. And have they not a Word to say to him? Will they not be ever turning aside to the Object of their Love, and intermix even their most urgent Business with frequent Applications to him? Can they be alwaies in his Company; and yet forget that he is there? Certainly, 'tis the Duty of Christians to pray without ceasing, as near as 'tis possible, even in a literal Sense; and to send forth Aspirations to Heaven, as naturally as they breath. And if this be done *extempore* (because 'tis impossible to do it constantly in a Form) doubtless 'twill be acceptable to God, even tho' sometimes accompanied with such Imperfections, as (if human Frailty would permit it) we ought to remove; and such as (if they were public) would render the Service of God ridiculous and contemptible.

In a Word then, let our private Devotions be ordinarily precompos'd set Forms: but let us not fear, when we are alone, if our Hearts are enlarged beyond our Forms, to make *extempore* Additions to 'em; and in the midst of our other Employments, and between our stated times of Devotion, maintain an Intercourse with Heaven by frequent, incessant, Ejaculations.

CHAP. XI.

That the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd, upon their own Principles, to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church.

III. I Must now shew in the third and last Place, that the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd, upon their own Principles, to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church.

I say, the *Lay* Dissenters; not that I account their Teachers to be any other than Lay Persons (for they want Episcopal Ordination, and consequently are Usurpers of the Ministerial Function,) but that I may distinguish the Congregations from their pretended Ministers by the usual Phrases.

And I assert no more, than that the *Lay* Dissenters are oblig'd, upon their own Principles, to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church. Because I purposely omit the Consideration of the Terms of Ministerial Conformity, which have

have been largely handled by other Persons, and are wholly foreign to my present Design. Besides, if it appear, that the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd, upon their own Principles, to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church; it will necessarily follow, that the pretended Ministers of the Dissenters are also oblig'd to do the same for the same Reasons. For whatever may be said against the Lawfulness of Ministerial Conformity; 'tis plain, that if the Worship of the Dissenters is to be abhorr'd by the Layety, upon their own Principles; it must for the same Reasons be abhorr'd by their Pastors. And consequently, the Pastors as well as their Flocks, are oblig'd upon their own Principles, either to use a precompos'd Liturgy of their own (which is not to be hop'd for) or to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church. Wherefore I shall shew, that the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd to do, as I've said.

1. Then, They think themselves oblig'd to join with such Assemblies of Christians, as worship God most conformably to the Rules and Precedents in Holy Scripture. And this they conceive the Assemblies of the Dissenters do. Now this very Principle obliges 'em to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church. For I have (a) elsewhere prov'd, that there is not the least Shadow of either Precept or Example of joint *extempore* Prayers, or the least Syllable of a Promise of a Faculty of conceiving Prayers *extempore*, in all the Bible. And consequently it can't be pretended, that we are either directed or encourag'd by the Scripture to join in *extempore* Prayers. But then, I have (b) prov'd

(a) in the Brief Hist. and the Discourse of the Gift of Prayer annex'd to it.

(b) prov'd, that the Holy Scriptures do not only injoin the Lord's Prayer, but also warrant the use of many other precompos'd set Forms; and also, 1. That the Ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, never join'd in any Prayers, but precompos'd set Forms only. 2. That those precompos'd set Forms, in which they join'd, were such as the respective Congregations were accusom'd to, and throughly acquainted with. So that the joint use of well known precompos'd set Forms of Prayer is not only warranted, but recommended, and commanded, in the Holy Scriptures; and none but such Forms were us'd in those Daies, when the Scriptures were written; and by those Persons who were the inspir'd Authors of 'em. Wherefore in the use of such Forms we worship God most conformably to the Rules and Precedents in Holy Scripture. And consequently the Lay Dissenters who think themselves oblig'd to join with such Assemblies, as worship God most conformably to the Rules and Precedents in Holy Scripture; are oblig'd, for this very Reason, and upon this very Principle, to abhor those *extempore* Prayers which are offer'd in their separate Assemblies, as being not only a Deviation from, but also a flat Contradiction to (and consequently a Condemnation of) all the Rules and Precedents in Holy Scripture; and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church, which uses such well known Forms, as are truly conformable thereto.

I must add, that were joint *extempore* Prayers as agreeable to the Rules and Precedents of Scripture, in all other Respects, as well known Forms are; yet the generality of the Dissenting Teachers do scarce ever use the Lord's Prayer, which is, as I've (c) elsewhere prov'd, plainly commanded in Scripture.

(b) (c) in the Brief History.

pture. And consequently such a scandalous Neglect and Omission of it, makes Communion with such Teachers as certainly unlawful, as the depriving the Layety of half of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, makes it unlawful to join in Communion with the Church of *Rome*.

ie. 2. They think themselves oblig'd to join with such Assemblies, as have the purest and most spiritual joint Worship, or the most excellent way of joint Praying. And this they conceive the Assemblies of the Dissenters have. Now this very Principle obliges 'em to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church. For (besides that 'tis in vain for us to pretend to find out a purer and a more spiritual joint Worship, or a more excellent way of joint Praying, than that which the Ancient *Jews*, our Savior, and the primitive Christians us'd), I've largely shewn in the foregoing Chapters, that the joint use of well known Forms is infinitely the best way of joint Worship. Because it enables us to offer up joint Prayers in the greatest degree of Perfection, that we are capable of. And consequently 'tis the purest and most spiritual joint Worship, or the most excellent way of joint Praying, that we can possibly practise; whereas the joint use of Prayers conceiv'd *extempore* does greatly hinder Devotion, and cannot but be intolerable upon many Accounts; insomuch that it displeases God. And consequently 'tis so far from being the purest and most spiritual joint Worship, or the most excellent way of joint Praying; that it is really abominable, and what Christians ought with all possible care to avoid, when 'tis in their Power to join in the use of well known Forms. Wherefore the Lay Dissenters, who think themselves oblig'd to join with such Assemblies, as have the purest and most spiritual joint Worship, or the

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the most excellent way of joint Praying; are oblig'd, for this very Reason, and upon this very Principle, to abhor those odious and detestable *extempore* Prayers, which are offer'd in their separate Assemblies; and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church, which uses such wholsom and edifying well known Forms, as are agreeable to the Word of God, and consequently grateful to him.

But 'tis said, that the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd to separate from the Establish'd Church, that by so doing they may bear witness against those Impositions, which she by an usurp'd Authority endeavors to lay upon 'em. This Pretence, tho' it carries with it a specious shew of Liberty, which we are apt to be too fond of, is notwithstanding an arrant Imposture. For (that I may wave the Dispute concerning the Church's Authority to impose) the Lay Dissenters are so far from avoiding Impositions by their Separation, that they do thereby bring upon themselves such Impositions as are really insupportable. For the *extempore* Prayers of the Dissenting Teachers are as much impos'd upon their Congregations, as the Common Prayer is impos'd upon the Members of the Establish'd Church. For there is no Possibility of joining with the Dissenting Teachers in Prayer, without having their *extempore* Effusions impos'd upon you; any more than you can join with us in Prayer, without having the Establish'd Liturgy impos'd upon you. And consequently, tho' there has been so great an Outcry made by the Dissenters against the Imposition of Forms of Prayer, yet Mr. Baxter himself tells you roundly, (d) that *All Sects in the World do it. I never heard any Separatist or Anabaptist or any other public Minister, but he impos'd a Form of Prayer upon all the Congregation. He is void of common Sense, that thinks that*

(d) *Cure of Church-Divisions*, Part 1. p. 179.

1. that his extemporary Prayer is not as truly a Form to all the People, as if it had been written in a Book. The Order and Words are not of your own Invention, but invented by another to your hand, and impos'd upon you to use. For I hope you come together to pray, and not to hear a Prayer only. But the Difference is, First, that one imposes every Day a new Form on you, and the other imposes every Day the same: Secondly, and that one tells you not what Words you shall pray in, before you hear 'em: and the other writes 'em down for you to know before-hand. For my part, I wonder why written or unwritten, long-premeditated or suddenly express'd Prayers, should be taken for unlawful. But however, do not think the Difference to lie where it does not. For doubtless, to the People they are both Forms, and both impos'd, tho' not impos'd by the same Persons and Authority.

'Twill be said perhaps, that Men are free to go to the Dissenting Meetings, or to forbear; but the Establish'd Liturgy is impos'd by Law. Be it so; yet the extempore Prayers of the Dissenting Teachers are as certainly impos'd, as the Establish'd Liturgy. For, that I may use (e) Mr. Baxter's Words, *Do you think, that there is no Imposition but by Force? Your Pastor is your Guide in the Worship of God; and God has impos'd it on you to follow him, and join with him in lawful Prayer. And what the Words shall be, and what the Matter and Order chosen for that time, the Speaker choses for you. And so he binds you by his Ministerial Authority (which is a true and lawful imposing) tho' he compel you not by the Sword or Force. So that by Separation you do not wholly escape, but only change the Impositions.*

But then let me beseech you to consider, that since some Impositions can't be avoided, you ought, upon your own Principles, to submit to those which are

(f) *ibid.* p. 81.

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are most reasonable, and most agreeable to Scripture Rules and Precedents. And consequently you ought to submit to the Churches Liturgy, rather than make your selves the Slaves of such Persons, as assume to every one of themselves, an Authority which they will not allow to a whole Convocation; and instead of joining with you in well digested Forms, force you to partake of their own wretched Crudities, and to be (very often) impudently free with your Maker.

But you'll say, the Ceremonies are injoin'd. And what then? The Ceremonies are not unlawful, and consequently may be complied with. But let us consider what these Ceremonies are. The Surplice is no more a Ceremony than a Band or a Cloak. And why may not Authority, as well as Custom, determine the Color or Shape of that Garment, which a Minister officiates in? Can't you be as devout in Prayer, if the Minister be clad in White, as if he were clad in Black?

But kneeling at the Sacrament is impos'd. True; nor is it possible to receive the Sacrament without some Posture? And why may not Authority determine us to kneeling, as well as your Custom (and sometimes your Teachers too) may determine you to standing? Besides, why may not the Establish'd Church impose kneeling at the Sacrament, as well as the generality of the Dissenters require you to submit to be examin'd by the Pastor, or Elder, before you can receive it? Where is your Scripture for this? or what Precedent is there in Antiquity for it? We are commanded indeed to examine *our selves*; but not to be examin'd by *others*. And why must the Dissenters impose what they please, tho' never so needless and unreasonable, and by such Impositions hinder Men from the Participation of the Sacraments, which

which Christ has left free from such arbitrary Conditions?

But the Cross and Sponsors are impos'd in Baptism. And can there be any thing of harm in either of these things, which (tho' the Scriptures are silent in the Matter) were both of 'em us'd in the purest primitive times?

These are all those Burdens, which have caus'd such hideous Exclamations. And surely you had better indure ten thousand such Impositions, than that one execrable load of joint *extempore* Prayers, which defile the Assemblies of Christians, and drive the Holy Spirit from 'em. Nay, your forsaking the Establish'd Church, and joining with the Dissenters, upon such trivial Accounts as these; is as if a Man should chuse, either to be a Gally Slave merely to avoid the Payment of a small Tax, which he thinks the Government has no Authority to demand; or to swallow all the Corruptions of *Popery*, rather than join in *Hopkins's* Psalms.

But you'll reply, that the Dissenting Ministers, tho' they impose on their Congregations, are free from Impositions themselves. Be it so; this does not help the Layety. For the Layety are nevertheless Slaves, whilst the Ministers are free. But in reality the Dissenting Ministers are also Slaves to their People, and are forc'd to act as they will have them. Else they'll quarrel with 'em, and withdraw themselves, and starve 'em. So that the Dissenting Ministers are forc'd in the strictest Sense to be *Men-pleasers*. They have so effectually taught their Congregations to despise Government, and to be utterly unruly, under a pretence of Liberty; that their Congregations are become their Masters. And indeed, tho' it may seem odd, they mutually tyrannize over each other.

Mr.

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Mr. Baxter was long since sensible of this Perverseness of the People, and of the Necessity which the Ministers lay under to comply with the Humors, even of the weakest of 'em. He saw, that the Dissenting Ministers were as absolutely forc'd to forbear Forms of Prayer, for Instance, as those of the Establish'd Church are forc'd to use them. His Words are these. *Is it not a Shame to you, saies (f) he, that your worthiest Ministers should be fain to go besides their own Judgment in God's Worship to humor you? And that they must tell the World, we would mix Free Prayer and Forms in Public, but the People then will be gone to the Separatists. I say not, that they go against their Consciences; for their Consciences have directed them to omit what else would have been fittest, lest crossing your Humor, it should drive you away to your own Subversion. But how came you to be so much Holier and Wiser than the holiest and wisest of your Teachers? Mark, is it not more of the Women and Apprentices that are of this Mind, than of the old experienc'd Christians? And (g) again, Should the Ministers in London, that have suffer'd so long, but use any Part of the Liturgy and Scripture Forms, tho' without any Motive, but the pleasing of God, and the Churches good, what muttering and censuring would there be against them? And woe to those few Teachers that make up their Designs by cherishing these Distempers. One would think, that their Warning had been fair. But — si nati sint ad bis perendum Angliam —. The Lord have Mercy upon us! What would Mr. Baxter have said, had he liv'd to see these Daies? Into such a blessed State has this Hatred of Impositions brought those who separate from our Establish'd Church!*

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To

(f) Sacrileg. Desert. Ch. 11. p. 102. Lond. 1672.

(g) Ibid. p. 105.

To conclude this Point, with an Argument, which alone is sufficient to silence all Objections; I have (b) elsewhere shewn, that the Practice of the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, warrants the Imposition of a National precompos'd Liturgy. Nay, that Man must be an utter Stranger to the Customs of the ancient *Jewish* and primitive Christian Churches, who does not know, that they observ'd many Rites in their Religious Worship, which were neither of divine Institution, nor necessary Determinations of indifferent things (such as Time, Place, &c.) and which had no other Reason for their being observ'd, but the Discretion of the Church Governors, and a receiv'd Practice, by which they were impos'd upon the respective Congregations. With all these Rites the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians cheerfully comply'd. And there was a great number of these Rites; whereas the Establish'd Church has very few, or almost none. Now it can't be doubted, but that the ancient *Jews*, our Savior, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, understood and practis'd their Duty, as well as our Dissenters. And if they did not think themselves under any Obligation to bear witness against the numerous Impositions of their respective Church Governors, and to assert their Liberty in Opposition to them; I can't conceive, that our Dissenters are under any Obligation to separate from the Establish'd Church upon the Account of a very few Impositions, so long as there is not one sinful one requir'd.

If it should be said, that some Lay Dissenters separate because our Constitution is Episcopal; I answer, that I can't think, but that the main Body
of

(b) Brief Hist. Chap. the last.

of the Dissenters can as contentedly join with a Man that is Episcopally ordain'd, as if he were in Claſſical or other Orders. And therefore this Objection is frivolous.

However, let me earnestly beſeech thoſe, who think that no Innovations muſt be made in matters of Church Government, and do for that Reaſon condemn our Episcopacy, which they ſuppoſe to be an Innovation; ſeriously and impartially to conſider, that even Mr. *Blondel* himſelf (to whoſe infinite reading the Oppoſers of Episcopacy are beholden for all thoſe ſlender Pleas in favor of Preſbytery, which they dress up in a thouſand Shapes, and endeavor to ſupport their Cauſe with) did in that very Book, which he wrote againſt Episcopacy, confeſs and declare as much as utterly deſtroys what theſe Objectors ſay. This appears from the following Letter written by Dr. *Peter du Moulin* to Dr. *Durel*, printed in the *Appendix* to Dr. *Durel's View*, p. 339, 340. Lond. 1662.

My Reverend Brother,

TO caſt my Mite into that rich Treafury which you are now furniſhing, I muſt inform you of a remarkable Paſſage very pertinent to your purpoſe. In the Year 1651. that great and good Man, my Lord Primate Uſher, told me, that the learned Mr. David Blondel had concluded his *Apologia pro Hieronymo* with Words to this purpoſe. ' By all that we have ſaid to aſſert the Rights of the Preſbytery, we do not intend to invalidate the Ancient and Apoſtolical Conſtitution of Episcopal Preheminence. ' But we believe, that whereſoever it is eſta bliſh'd conformably to the ancient Canons, it muſt be carefully preſerv'd; and whereſoever by ſome heat of Contention or otherwiſe it has been put down

or violated, it ought to be reverently restor'd. The good Primate told me besides, that whereas the Book had been written at the earnest Request of the Assembly of Westminster, of the Scots especially, who had their Agents and Leagers in Paris to strengthen their Party by misinforming the Protestants of France, and winning them to their Side; when these Agents saw this Conclusion of Mr. Blondel's Manuscript, they expostulated with him very loud for marring all the good he had done in his Book, disappointing the Expectation of the Assembly, and shewing himself an Enemy, instead of a Friend, to their holy Covenant. This they urg'd upon him with such Vehemency and unwearied Importunity, that they prevail'd with him to put out that Conclusion. Having receiv'd that Information from a Person of so much Knowledge and Integrity, as that famous Prelate, yet for a further Confirmation I told it to Mr. John Blondel (David's Brother) then living in London, who denied that there was any Truth in that Report, and defended his Brother, as much wrong'd by it. If you think (said I) that I wrong your Brother, complain to him of me in your next Letter, and remember my kind Service to him. Mr. John Blondel did not fail to write to his Brother about this. And three or four Weeks after shew'd me a Letter from him, wherein he remember'd his Love to me, and acknowledg'd that the Relation was true.

This Advice I thought my self oblig'd to give you, knowing that no Man can make a better Use of it than your self, to whose holy Labors about this Point, the Church is so much indebted, and none more your Debtor in the Church in that Regard than,

S I R,

Your most affectionate Brother and Servant

Peter du Moulin.

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The Truth on't is, if any Dissenters separate upon this Principle, they little consider the Consequence of it, or understand what Government Christ instituted in his Church. Would they but impartially peruse Scripture and Antiquity, they could not but discern, that Episcopacy was establish'd all the World over by the Apostles, and consequently by Christ himself. Nor have we better Proof of the universal Observance even of the Christian Sacraments, than we have of the perpetual Government of all Parts of the Christian Church by Bishops as superior to Presbyters. So that all other Church Government is arrant Innovation, and a Departure from Christ's Rule. And consequently, these Objectors must, upon their own Principles, return to our Episcopal Church; because they are bound in Conscience to join in that Communion, which retains the primitive Form of Government.

If it should be pretended, that we want good Discipline; I answer, 1. That the Dissenters want it as much, or more; and consequently their Case is at least as bad as ours. 2. That the Dissenters want good Worship too; and consequently their Case is infinitely worse than ours. But this Objection I've largely consider'd in the *Discourse of Schism*, Ch. 18. p. 62, &c.

Thus then you see, with how much ease those Pretences, which may possibly be made against your joining with the Establish'd Church, are either answer'd or retorted upon your selves. Wherefore what I've been proving in this Chapter remains firm and good, *viz.* That you are oblig'd, upon your own Principles, to abhor those joint *extempore* Prayers which are offer'd in your separate Assemblies. Because, 1. they are not only not warranted by, but also quite different from, nay, directly
contrary

contrary to, the Rules and Precedents in the Holy Scriptures. 2. They are really intolerable in the very Nature of them; because they hinder Devotion, and displease God. And you are also oblig'd, upon your own Principles, to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church: because she uses such a precompos'd Liturgy, as is agreeable to the Word of God, and very fit to promote Devotion.

God grant, that these Principles of yours may lead you to a futable Practice; that our most unchristian Divisions may be healed, and we may tast of those Blessings, which are promis'd to such Brethren, as dwell together in Religious Unity.

T H E E N D.

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A Discourse of Joint Prayer; shewing, I. What is meant by joint Prayer. II. That the joint Use of Prayers conceiv'd extempore hinders Devotion, and consequently displeases God: whereas the joint Use of such precompos'd set Forms, as the Congregation is accustomed to, and thoroughly acquainted with, does most effectually promote Devotion, and consequently is commanded by God. III. That the Lay Dissenters are oblig'd, upon their own Principles, to abhor the Prayers offer'd in their separate Assemblies, and to join in Communion with the Establish'd Church.

All by the same Author.



